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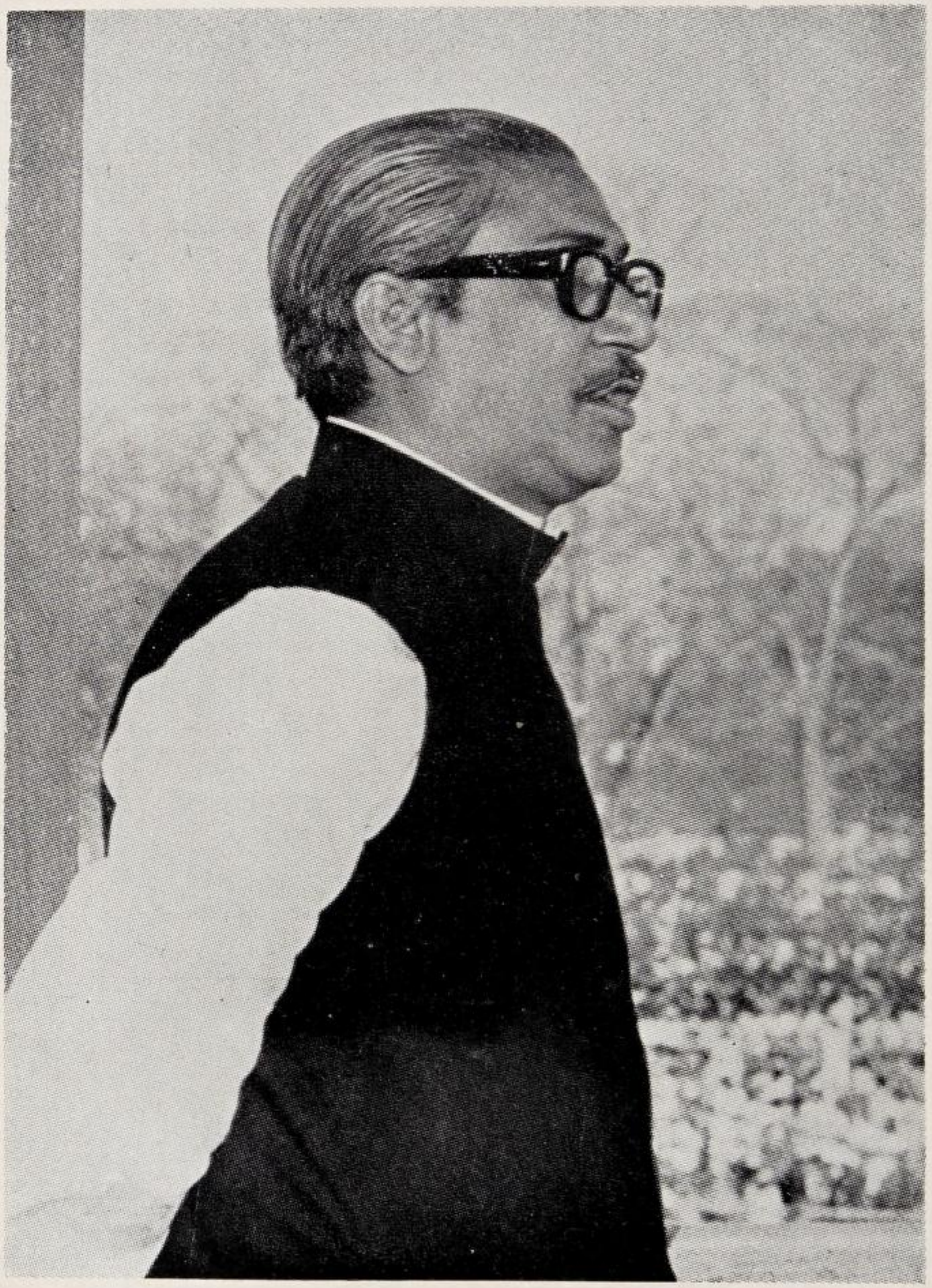

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

Bangladesh, My Bangladesh

Selected Speeches and Statements
October 28, 1970 to March 26, 1971

Edited with notes by
Ramendu Majumdar

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To the mother of a martyr

That afternoon
  there was a storm in the river of music;
  all your sons and daughters
had joined together
to sing,
Ours were many voices but we sang a common song;
Ours were different words, diverse tunes
  but our music was the same.

Lines (in translation) from Shahedullah Kaisar who became a victim of the mass murder of intellectuals in Bangladesh in mid December, 1971.

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Foreword

The story of the emergence of Bangladesh has already been told in various forms and will be retold many times over in future. But who can tell it better than Sheikh Mujibur Rahman himself? The speeches and statements contained in this volume, carefully selected and edited, present a story that is as authentic as it is complete. The selections cover a most crucial period of the life of the people of Bangladesh as well as that of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The editor and publishers of this volume are to be congratulated for this splendid efforts which takes the reader directly into the heart of Bangladesh and allows him to bear witness to the birth of a nation. No other book available at present has attempted this kind of task and succeeded in it so well. I am confident that this publication will be welcomed by readers everywhere in the free world.

HUMAYUN RASHEED CHOUDHURY
Chief of Mission,
People's Republic of Bangladesh,
New Delhi

Introduction

When Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a student leader, his one time political mentor Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani had seen the sparks in the young man and commented : "Pakistan's prosperity is assured if Mujibur could grow into a man." Those sparks have now ignited the flame that has lighted the way for a people's liberation. Proving that Bhashani's words were an understatement, Mujib has grown up and into one of the great leaders of the contemporary world who has brought into being its latest and eighth largest nation. Bhashani would also agree that Mujib tried his utmost, upto a point, to ensure the prosperity of the Pakistan that was. That Pakistan has now disappeared under the heap of countless bodies of dead Bengalees.

It is true that the declared struggle for independence of Bangladesh covers a period of less than nine months from the end of March 1971. It is also true that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman emerged as a champion of his people only in early 1969 when President Ayub Khan had to release him from prison after the Agartala Conspiracy Case—better termed as the Rawalpindi Conspiracy hatched by Pakistan's the then rulers - fell through. But the real struggle for independence began as far back as

August 1947 when Pakistan was established on the theory that Hindus and Muslims are two nations. And Mujib's first public protest against national wrong was voiced when he joined the shouts of 'No! No!' against Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's declaration at Dacca in March 1948 that Urdu would be the only State language of Pakistan. This would lead to the Language Movement, which landed Mujib in jail several times between 1948 and 1954, and culminated in the liberation of Bangladesh.

Born on 17 March, 1920 to a middle-class family of Tungipara, a village in Gopalganj sub-division of Faridpur district, Mujib went to school in Gopalganj. He was not an exceptional student but an intelligent and popular boy, whose studies were interrupted for about three years on account of eye trouble. For college education he went to Calcutta's Islamia College (now known as Maulana Azad College) from where he graduated in liberal arts in 1947, a few months before Partition. Then he returned home to study law at the University of Dacca.

While still in high school he was arrested for attending a political rally and jailed for a week. This incident, he said later, changed his way of life. As a college student he came under the influence of H.S. Suhrawardy who was then working tirelessly for the Muslim League. Mujib became an active member of the All India Muslim Students' League, and came to be recognized as one of the top leaders of the student body. Soon after the creation of Pakistan, it became clear to Mujib that it would not be possible much longer for a man of his line of thought to go along with the thinking of the Muslim League, a party virtually controlled by a few wealthy Muslim families. Also he foresaw early the dangers to Bengali nationalism in a Pakistan dominated by its western wing.

His formal break with the Muslim League came in June 1949 at Narayanganj when he stood beside Maulana Bhashani to found the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League. Maulana Bhashani and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were the founder-President and Joint Secretary respectively of this new party, the first effective

Opposition party to be born in the new country. Later, the word 'Muslim' was dropped from the nomenclature of the party to clarify its secular aspirations.

The strong reaction of Bengali nationalism against West Pakistani domination was amply demonstrated in the general elections of 1954 when the Muslim League was totally routed in East Pakistan by a combination of forces led in their respective spheres by Maulana Bhashani, H.S. Suhrawardy, A.K. Fazlui Huq and young Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The rulers of Pakistan bowed to the verdict of the Bengalee people and permitted *Sher-e-Bangla* Fazlul Huq to form a cabinet in the Province. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who had been elected to the Provincial Assembly, was included in this cabinet as its youngest member and entrusted with the portfolio of Commerce and Industry.

Soon after, accompanied by Mujib and others, Fazlul Huq came to Calcutta on a short visit. In one or two speeches, Fazlul Huq made sentimental reference to undivided Bengal and Bengali nationalism. Pakistani authorities seized this pretext to dissolve the popular ministry of the Province and place its Chief Minister under house arrest. Mujib was also sent to jail and had to undergo torture by the jail authorities.

In 1955, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected by his people to the Pakistan National Assembly. He again became a Provincial Minister in 1956, but left the cabinet a year later to devote himself to party organisation as General Secretary of the Awami League. With the promulgation of martial law by President Ayub Khan in September 1958, he was immediately put behind the bars and a number of criminal cases were filed against him by the Pakistan Government. But he was acquitted in all these cases and released from detention in December 1959. Earlier, he twice visited the People's Republic of China—as leader of his country's delegation to the World Peace Conference at Peking in 1954, and again as the leader of a delegation of Pakistani Parliamentarians in 1957.

The celebrated Six-point Programme of the Awami League was

launched by Mujib in early 1966, and it immediately caught the imagination of the Bengalees. Ayub Khan anticipated the dangers of such a movement if it was allowed to grow. Mujib was promptly arrested and again about a dozen criminal cases were instituted against him. In January 1968 he was removed from the Dacca Central Jail to the Dacca Cantonment by military authorities, and he was charged with the crime of conspiring to bring about the secession of the eastern wing. In addition to acute physical distress in military prison, Mujib suffered all kinds of mental torture. But, as on so many occasions earlier, Mujib faced the situation with unyielding courage. In early 1969, a country-wide mass upsurge forced Ayub Khan to withdraw the so-called Agartala Conspiracy Case, release the Sheikh unconditionally, and himself step down from power. Then came Yahya Khan, and Mujib's leadership was tested in ways as never before.

It is difficult to single out any one of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's many leader-like qualities which have attracted sustained devotion from his followers during indescribably difficult days. Physical courage and mental toughness are his obvious strengths. They have served him notably through persistent attempts by the West Pakistani authorities to break him down. His powers of oratory must also have contributed greatly to his success; he can hold masses of people spell bound for hours on end. Communalism he hates from the core of his heart. He has always said that whoever lives in Bangladesh, irrespective of caste or creed or language, is a Bengalee. I have personal experience of this. During the communal riots of 1964 in Dacca, Mujib and his partymen worked day and night to protect innocent Hindus against communal fanatics. One of my relatives, who happened to be a former teacher of Mujib's, informed him of our family's possible danger in the riot-affected Tejgaon area. Mujib rushed to our house in a jeep, got us into the vehicle in a matter of minutes, and took us straight to his Dhanmandi residence. All of us in the family that night received a new lease of life.

Mujib stands about an inch short of six feet. He has a shock of grey hair and a bushy moustache. His usual dress is a white *pyjama*, white *kurta* and a short sleeveless jacket which has now been named after him. He genuinely practises plain living. He puffs continuously on a pipe which, he confesses, is the only foreign thing in his personal use.

A careful reading of the present selection will show how dynamic his leadership is. He is ever alert to changing situations and quickly takes major decisions. Usually he is right. Only his last decision not to go underground on 25 March, 1971 has appeared a wrong move to many critics. But he had his justifications. He had believed that the people of Dacca would be victims of the worst kind of army action if he went underground. Moreover, how could he go into hiding after having urged his people for so long to face the enemy with whatever they had? Events proved him wrong, the army did not spare the people of Dacca even after arresting Mujib, but that does not take away the basis of his decision.

Newspaper reports have provided the main source for the selection included here. While it has been possible to reproduce the full text of statements, for most of the speeches only extracts have been given. Effort has been made to select only the best portions of a speech from various newspaper reports of that speech. For speeches originally in Bengali, English translations as they appeared in newspapers have been used. For one speech, only a recording was available and it has been represented almost fully in translation.

It only remains to add that the editor claims no credit for this work except that of having survived and thus been given the opportunity to put together this collection.

RAMENDU MAJUMDAR

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R.M.

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1

We Pledge

Pakistan Television Service and Radio Pakistan sponsored a programme entitled 'Political Broadcast' on the eve of the country's general elections. The leaders of all contesting parties were invited to participate, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Awami League Chief happened to be the first speaker in the series.

This was for the first time in Pakistan that politicians other than those in power were allowed to express their political views over mass-media. Also for the first time in the history of broadcasting in Pakistan, somebody could refer to East Pakistan as 'Bengal'—a word which, among many other words related to Bengali culture and literature, had been banned from Radio and TV.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made this broadcast on October 28, 1970. There were two recordings—one in Bengali for listeners in East Pakistan, another in English for West Pakistan. The full text of the latter appears here.

I must begin by offering *Munajat* for those heroic martyrs, who shed their blood and laid down their lives for the cause of the people. It is their sacrifices and that of countless thousands who have defied tyranny, in movement after movement leading up to last year's historic mass upsurge, that has carried the people's

struggle forward. Indeed, even the fact that I am able to speak to you over the national radio and television network may be counted as one of the initial gains of the people's struggle, since uptill this time this privilege was monopolised by those in power.

Our struggle must go on. For the real goal lies ahead. Power has to be won by the people. The exploitation of man by man and of region by region must be brought to an end. The powerful coteries which have ruled Pakistan for 22 years, will do everything possible to prevent transfer of power to the people. It is they who are actively conspiring to frustrate the holding of the general elections, and even after elections, they will continue to obstruct every effort to end exploitation. They have money, they have influence and they have the capacity to use force against the people. History, however, testifies that determined people can successfully resist and overcome such forces of oppression.

The most solemn pledge that the Awami League can make to the people of Pakistan is that it shall stand by their side and indeed lead them in resisting the forces of oppression and exploitation. No people have secured freedom and justice unless they have been prepared to die for it. We, therefore, serve notice upon the forces of reaction in our society that we, along with the people of Pakistan, will confront them and if democratic processes are obstructed, we shall resist them by every means possible.

The Awami League was born in adversity and has grown in adversity. Under our great leader, the late Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, we came into existence to defy the attempt of the ruling party to form a one-party State. We thus began the struggle to establish democracy in Pakistan. This struggle continues till this day. Our Party has faced onslaught after onslaught from the ruling group. Our leadership and our workers have spent the better part of their lives in jails. We have faced and overcome every form of repression. It is this that gives us the courage and confidence today to commit ourselves to the task of confronting the anti-democratic forces.

To overcome the crisis that engulfs the nation, we must

resolve those issues which are its cause. The first is the deprivation of political freedom. The second is the sense of economic injustice felt by the overwhelming multitudes of our people. The third is the deep sense of injustice created by the widening economic disparity between the regions. It is this that underlies the anguish and the anger of the Bengali people. The same sentiment is reflected among the down-trodden people of the neglected areas of West Pakistan.

Our manifesto sets out a comprehensive strategy for resolving these fundamental issues. A real living democracy must be established, in which all the fundamental freedom shall be constitutionally guaranteed. Our manifesto outlines a framework for the healthy growth of political parties, trade unions and local self-government. We do pledge to restore complete freedom of the press and academic freedom and to eradicate corruption which has grown like cancer in our society.

The present economic system, which has established an intolerable structure of injustice, must be radically altered.

Today, barely two dozen families have acquired control over 60 per cent of the nation's industrial assets, 80 per cent of its banking assets and 75 per cent of its insurance assets; 82 per cent of the total bank advances are concentrated in only three per cent of the total accounts. The tax structure in existence is one of the most regressive in the world. Only two pe cent of the GNP is being realised as direct taxes as against six per cent in other developing countries, while oppressive indirect taxes are imposed on such essential commodities as salt.

Protected markets, tax holidays, huge subsidies in the form of bonus vouchers, credits and grants of foreign exchange at the artificially-low official rate have created specially favourable conditions for the growth of monopolies and cartels.

Despite nominal land reforms, feudal lords have retained princely estates. They enjoy vast privileges and their prosperity increases while the lot of the poor peasants becomes more and more desperate. In a bid for survival, there is a movement of

people from the villages to the cities. According to official estimates one-fifth of the total labour force or about 90 lakh people are unemployed. This alarming figure continues to grow. The industrial workers are suffering the full impact of the sharp rise in the cost of living. The cost of living is increasing more rapidly than the increase in money wages. The impact of the unending rise in the cost of living is also acutely felt by school and college teachers, low-paid officers and employees, particularly the 4th grade employees of the Government.

To turn now to the appalling record of economic disparity, it is seen that during the last 20 years out of the total revenue expenditure of the Government, only about Rs 1,500 crores (that is only one-fifth of the total) were spent in Bengal, as against over Rs 5,000 crores in West Pakistan. Of the total development expenditure during the same period, Rs 3,060 crores (that is only one-third of the total) were spent in Bengal, as against over Rs 6,000 crores in West Pakistan. Over 20 years, West Pakistan has imported goods worth more than Rs 3,000 crores as against its own foreign exchange earnings of barely Rs 1,300 crores. Imports into West Pakistan have been three times the value of the imports into Bengal.

It was made possible for West Pakistan to import goods worth Rs 2,000 crores in excess of its export earnings by allocating to it Rs 500 crores of the foreign exchange earnings of Bengal and allowing it to utilise over 80 per cent of all foreign aid.

The record in the field of Government services is just as deplorable. After 22 years, Bengalees account for barely 15 per cent in Central Government services and less than 10 per cent in the defence services.

The total economic impact of such discrimination has been that the economy of Bengal is today in a state of imminent collapse. Near famine conditions are prevailing in the majority of the villages. Some 15 lakh tons of rice has had to be imported only to save the people from starvation.

While inflation has been mounting those who are worse

hit are the poor people of Bengal. The prices of essential commodities have been 50 to 100 per cent higher in Bengal than in West Pakistan; the average price of coarse rice in Bengal is Rs 45 to 50 per maund as against Rs 20 to 25 per maund in West Pakistan and that of wheat is Rs 30 to 35 per maund in East Bengal as against Rs 15 to 20 per maund in West Pakistan. Mustard oil sells in Bengal at Rs 5 per seer as against Rs 2.50 per seer in West Pakistan. The gold price is Rs 135 to 140 per tola in Karachi as against Rs 160 to 165 per tola in Dacca. Even a Customs barrier has been imposed against carrying gold from West Pakistan to Bengal.

This injustice is the product of the management of the economy for 22 years by the Central Government. The Central Government is incapable of redressing such injustices. This is borne out by the Fourth Five-Year Plan. The Fourth Plan allocations are a confession of the failure of the Central Government, however powerful it might be, to redress past injustices.

The Awami League's Six-point Programme, which is embodied in the Eleven-point Programme, presents a rational solution to this problem of regional injustice. With a Central bureaucracy in which Bengalees account for barely 15 per cent and with the nature of the power structure being what it is, to expect justice from a centralised system of economic management would be to expect the impossible. Attempts to secure larger allocations by political representatives of Bengal and the other underdeveloped areas would only aggravate regional tensions and threaten the viability of the Federal Government. The only feasible solution is the re-ordering of the constitutional structure by giving full regional autonomy to the federating units on the basis of our Six-point formula. Such autonomy in order to be effective must include the power of managing the economy. This is why we insist upon federating units having control over monetary and fiscal policy and foreign exchange earnings and other powers to negotiate foreign trade and aid. By giving to the federating units full control over its economic destiny

while entrusting to the Federal Government responsibility over foreign affairs and defence and subject to certain safeguards, currency, we believe a just Federal balance will be attained.

Our Federal scheme envisages the abolition of All Pakistan services and its replacement by Federal services in which persons shall be recruited on the basis of population for all parts of Pakistan.

We also believe that the maintenance of a militia or a para-military force by the federating units will effectively contribute towards national security. This federal scheme by removing the sources of doubt, distrust and discrimination will ensure a strong Pakistan.

This scheme will understandably be opposed by those in one region who would like to treat another region as a colony or a market. We believe, however, that this scheme will have the full support of the common people of Bengal and West Pakistan. Within this constitutional framework, we believe it will be possible to bring about a social revolution through the democratic process and to create a socialist economic order, free from exploitation.

Rapid economic growth is an imperative necessity in order to meet the needs of our growing population. To achieve it, enormous effort and sacrifices are required of our people. Our people can be expected to respond to our call for making a big collective effort only if we can assure them that the burden of sacrifices as well as the fruits of economic prosperity shall be equitably shared among all sections of the people and all regions of the country. To ensure this, certain radical changes must be made in the structure of our economy.

We believe that it is imperative to place key areas of the economy including banking and insurance under public ownership through nationalisation. Furture development in these areas should take place in the public sector. In the new order, workers should share the equity capital and management of industrial enterprises.

The private sector also in its own sphere, must make its full contribution to the economy. Monopolies and cartels must be totally eliminated. The tax structure must be made truly progressive and drastic restrictions must be imposed on the consumption of luxuries.

Extensive support and encouragement must be extended to small-scale and cottage industries. Such support should include ensuring regular supply of raw materials, such as yarn and dyestuffs to handloom weavers at reasonable prices. Marketing and credit facilities must also be made available to them.

Small-scale industries must be developed through co-operatives and dispersed throughout the countryside reaching into the depths of the rural areas so that desperately needed employment opportunities are extended to our rural masses.

Jute has suffered from criminal neglect. A discriminatory exchange rate and parasitic middle-men have denied to the jute growers a fair price. Nationalisation of the jute trade and much greater emphasis on jute research aimed at improving quality and yield per acre will enable jute to make its rightful contribution to our economy.

Cotton needs similar attention, and, therefore, we believe that cotton trade should also be nationalised and measures adopted to improve quality and yield. Our major cash crops, tea, sugarcane and tobacco still suffer from appallingly low yields due to neglect of previous governments.

In a resource-poor country every effort must be made to ensure rapid increase in productivity. A fair and stable price to the growers should also be ensured.

Indeed our entire agricultural sector needs to be revolutionised. The *Jagirdari, Zamindari* and *Sardari* systems in West Pakistan must be abolished. The entire land system has to undergo a radical reorientation in the interest of the actual tillers of land. Ceiling must be imposed on landholdings. Land above such ceilings and government's *Khas* land must be re-distributed to landless cultivators.

Agriculture must be modernised. The obstacle presented by the fragmentation and sub-division of landholdings must be overcome. An immediate step in the right direction would be to induce the tillers to group their holdings under multipurpose cooperatives. Government could provide effective inducement for this purpose by funnelling through such cooperatives vital inputs, such as irrigation, embankment, drainage, deep tube-wells, power pumps, fertilizers, improved seeds, agricultural implements and machinery, credit and instruction in modern agricultural techniques.

As a measure of immediate relief to our peasants who are groaning under the burden of land revenue, we would abolish land revenue in respect of holdings up to 25 bighas and write off all arrears in respect of such holdings. Ultimately we aim at abolishing the present system of land revenue.

Three vital areas which form part of the infrastructure of the economy must be accorded the highest priority. The first is flood control. A comprehensive flood control programme must be implemented on an emergency basis. Measures to prevent water-logging and salinity in West Pakistan must also be implemented at an accelerated pace.

The next vital area is that of power. There must be massive expansion in power generation and distribution.

An extensive rural electrification programme must be launched to take electricity to the villages, so as to make it possible for small-scale industries to be established. We aim at attaining power generation capacity of 2,500 megawatts in Bengal within five years. Every source of power must be harnessed to maximise power generation capacity. The Rooppur Nuclear Power Project and Jamalganj Coal Project must be immediately implemented. Natural gas must also be fully utilised.

The third vital area is that of transport and communications. The highest priority is accorded by us to the construction of a bridge over the river Jamuna to enable direct communication to and from North Bengal. Bridges should also be developed

over different points on the river Indus in Sind and the Punjab and over the Buriganga, Sitalakhya and Karnaphuli.

The development of ports, both sea-ports and inland river ports, as also roads and railways must be accorded the highest priority.

No investment is more vital for the healthy development of our society than investment in education. It is an alarming fact that the number of primary schools in Bengal has declined since 1947. Only 18 per cent of our population has attained literacy and the number of illiterates is increasing by over one million persons per year. Primary education is denied to more than half of the nation's children. Only 18 per cent of our boys and 6 per cent of our girls complete the first five years of elementary school. We believe that at least 4 per cent of the Gross National Product should be committed to education. The salary of college and school teachers, and in particular school teachers, must be substantially increased. Illiteracy must be eradicated by adoption of extraordinary methods.

A crash programme must be launched to extend free compulsory primary education to all children within five years. Secondary education should be made readily accessible to all sections of our people. New universities, including medical and technical universities, must be rapidly established. Poverty should not be allowed to deprive meritorious boys and girls of the opportunity to pursue higher education. Immediate steps should be taken to ensure that Bengali and Urdu should replace English in all walks of life, while every effort should be made to encourage the development of regional languages.

Turning to the problem of the cities we find low income groups living in sub-human conditions. The so-called improvement trusts have been busy developing luxurious residential areas for the wealthy, while the poor have been left to fend for themselves. Future urban development must concentrate on providing for the needs of the poor majority of city dwellers. Low cost urban housing must be accorded the highest priority.

In the field of health, even a minimum measure of medical relief is denied to over 90 per cent of our population. Immediate measures should be undertaken to establish a rural medical centre at every union and a hospital at every *thana* headquarters. National service in the rural areas should be introduced for medical graduates, and para-medical personnel must be trained in a large number to staff the rural health centres.

Industrial workers play as vital a role in the economy as in the people's struggle. Their basic right to form trade unions to bargain collectively and their right to strike must be guaranteed. A living wage and basic amenities, such as housing, education and medical care for themselves and their children must be assured. All labour laws which restrict the basic rights of workers must be repealed. By ensuring that workers are given a stake in the industry, they can be expected to make their full contribution towards increasing industrial productivity. Productivity in all sections of the economy must be increased to the maximum extent possible if we are to meet the needs of our society.

The wage structure throughout the economy must be altered in keeping with the dictates of justice. Price stabilisation measures must be adopted to protect the real wages of the workers and low paid employees against spiralling inflation.

We firmly believe in the equality of all citizens. The members of the minority community should know that we have always stood against every form of communalism. They shall enjoy equal rights with all other citizens and shall enjoy equal protection of the laws. Every effort must be made to develop our tribal areas so that these areas can be fully integrated with other areas and the tribal people are able to enjoy equal opportunities with other citizens in all walks of life. Our brothers in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, in the off-shore islands and the coastal areas, require special assistance to develop their latent resources, in order to enable them to play their rightful part in our national life.

Mohajirs should be integrated into the national life so that they may become assimilated with the local people and thus enjoy equal rights and opportunities with them in all walks of life.

I must repudiate once and for all the false propaganda that Islam is endangered by the Six-point formula or our economic programme. Nothing which promotes justice between region and region and man and man can be opposed to Islam. We have affirmed our commitment to the constitutional principle that no law should be enacted or imposed in Pakistan which is repugnant to the injunctions of Islam as contained in the Holy *Quran* and *Sunnha*.

To turn to the important area of foreign policy, we believe, that it is imperative for us to avoid involvement in global power conflicts. We must, therefore, pursue a truly independent non-aligned foreign policy. We are committed to the immediate withdrawal from SEATO, CENTO and all other military pacts, and to avoid any such involvements in the future. We support the struggle of the oppressed people of the world against imperialism, colonialism and apartheid. In keeping with the principle of 'friendship for all and malice towards none', we believe in peaceful co-existence with all states and, in particular, our neighbours.

We believe that normalisation of our relations with our neighbours would be to the best advantage of our peoples. We, therefore, attach the highest importance to the settlement of our outstanding disputes. We have emphasized the importance of a just settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with United Nation's resolutions. The threat of grave and permanent damage to the economy of Bengal posed by the completion of Farakka Barrage must be immediately met. Every effort must be made for a just solution of this problem without further delay.

But these programmes and policies can only be implemented if power is won by the people. Elections will serve as a referendum on basic national issues particularly that of autonomy on

the basis of the Six-point formula.

The elected representatives of the people alone can give to this country a Constitution which will be a durable basis for living together. It is for this reason that we have repeatedly pointed out that restrictions sought to be imposed on the constitution-making powers of the elected representatives of the people are not legitimate. We would once again urge upon the President to repeal the restrictive provisions of the Legal Framework Order. It would also help to create conditions congenial for restoration of democracy if all pending cases and warrants against political workers, students and labourers, arising out of political activities and out of last year's mass upsurge, are withdrawn, and all sentences imposed in such cases are commuted. All political prisoners detained without trial should also be released.

It is imperative for the security of the nation that our armed forces should not have to carry the burden of civil administration or to have to involve themselves in politics. These highly trained professionals should be left free to devote themselves exclusively to the vital task of defending the nation's frontiers.

I would like to end by saying that as a nation we must prove equal to the challenge that faces us. A real living democracy must be established. The different people who make up Pakistan can only live together within a democratic framework. Any attempt to destroy democracy would in the process destroy Pakistan. Justice between region and region must be ensured by granting full regional autonomy to the federating units on the basis of our Six-point formula. Within such a federal democratic framework radical economic programmes must be implemented to bring about a social revolution.

The Awami League has resolved to face this great challenge. We believe that with the support and confidence of the people, which our party enjoys. we shall, *Inshallah* be able successfully to meet the challenge. PAKISTAN ZINDABAD.

Dawn, Karachi, October 29, 1970

2

Calamity in Coastal Areas

The coastal districts of Bangladesh were ravaged by an unprecedented cyclone and tidal bore on the night of November 12-13, 1970. Foreign journalists flashed this news to the world long before the Pakistani authorities seemed aware of it and foreign agencies announced relief measures before the Pakistan Government did. About one million lives were estimated to have been lost in what turned out to be the greatest ever such catastrophe in recorded human history.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman rushed to these areas with relief materials and also to assess the extent of the calamity. On his return to Dacca, he addressed a press conference on November 26, 1970 in Hotel Shahbag. The full text of the prepared statement he read out to about 150 local and foreign journalists is given here.

I have just returned after an extensive tour of the calamity affected coastal areas spread over Barisal, Patuakhali, Noakhali and Khulna. By now the world has come to know of the immensity of the devastation wrought by the terrible cyclone and tidal bore which ravaged those areas on the night of the 12th and the early hours of the 13th November, 1970. To you, the members of the press, the grief-stricken people of Bangladesh will owe an eternal

debt of gratitude for having brought into focus the catastrophic magnitude of the calamity which has struck us.

Today we estimate the number of dead to be almost a million, some estimates exceed one million. The stench of death hangs heavily over those areas, as thousands of corpses and carcasses still lie there unburied over nine days. I have moved through those areas—the Paikgacha area in Khulna, almost the whole of Bhola, including Daulatkhan, Tamijuddin, Burhanuddin, Char Lalmohan, Char Fasson and the island of Monpura, the affected parts of Patuakhali district, including Kallaya and neighbouring areas in Bauphol P.S., different areas in Golapchipa P.S., in particular the Char areas and islands facing the Bay of Bengal including the islands of Rangabil, Bara Baisdiya, Char Kajal and Pan Patti and the stricken areas in Noakhali district, in particular Hatiya Island, Char Gazi, Char Abdullah and Char Alexander and other affected areas in Ramgati P.S. and Sudharam P.S.

I cannot find words adequate to describe the holocaust which the cyclone and tidal bore have left in their trail. Nor can I adequately convey in words the suffering and the misery of those who have survived. Whole areas have been totally depopulated. In many areas of Patuakhali, Bhola and Noakhali barely 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the total population has survived. The survivors have lost their homes, their crops, their cattle, in fact, they have lost all their worldly belongings. They are without clothes, without shelter and in many of the areas without any food or drinking water. The wounds on their bodies are turning septic. They thus face death from starvation, exposure and disease. What is, however, utterly appalling is the total failure of the Government to discharge its obligations at every stage. Despite the advance information available through SUPARCO and the weather satellites, almost two whole days before the cyclone struck, no proper or adequate warning was given to the unwary inhabitants of the coastal areas, let alone any attempts being made

to evacuate at least some of them. After the cyclone, there was hardly any attempt to make an accurate estimate of the death toll or the damage. Absurdly low figures were put out by the Government. The initial Government reports gave the death figure as being around 50 !

A massive rescue and relief operation if launched within 24 hours of the occurrence could have saved thousands of lives. Thousands of survivors could have been saved from death due to starvation, exposure and lack of medical attention. Had the Navy rushed into the area it could have rescued thousands who had been swept into the sea. The failure to launch such a relief and rescue operation is unforgivable. But the criminal negligence does not end here. I have been to areas where even ten days after the occurrence of the cyclone, not an ounce of relief had reached the afflicted people. They have had to subsist on the root of trees. They have been drinking water, polluted by rotting corpses and carcasses, which has caused sores to form in their mouths. Dysentery has broken out on a wide scale and a cholera epidemic has begun to spread. Private organisations, social workers and scores of Awami League and Students' League relief teams, which have gone into the field, have been severely handicapped by the failure of the administration to ensure a minimum availability of transport and communication facilities. This acute shortage could easily have been overcome if the Government, specially a Martial Law Government, had made timely use of its ample powers to requisition launches and other river craft from other districts and to deploy these in sufficient numbers in the affected areas. The so-called 'inaccessible' areas would then have no longer been so, since my own experience shows that even a small, broken launch such as the one I used, could reach almost every affected area, including those lying along the Bay of Bengal. As a result of these failures and bottlenecks, hardly any Government relief had reached the people even after a lapse of ten days of the occurrence of the cyclone.

Today some activity is to be seen. Some helicopters are visible.

The air-dropping, which previously only occurred on paper, seems to have begun. All this has started only after loud and repeated public protests were made throughout the province. Indeed even today the deficiencies would be monumental but for the vast quantities of relief materials which have poured in from all over the world. It is a sad reflection on our Government that the ravaged people of Bangladesh today expect to survive only due to the generosity of the world community.

The world has sent us food, clothing, medicines and vital transport equipment essential for carrying these implements of survival to our stricken brethren. The people of Bangladesh will be eternally indebted to those countries who have so generously come to their rescue in their hour of need. I whole-heartedly extend my thanks to the governments and people of all those countries for their prompt and humane response to the urgent needs of our people in the calamity affected areas.

The generous assistance received from abroad only underlines the tardiness and callousness of our own rulers. At a time when West Pakistan is enjoying a bumper wheat crop it is ironic that the first shipment of foodgrains to reach us is from abroad. While we have a substantial army stationed in West Pakistan, it is left to British Marines to bury our dead in Patuakhali. While we have army helicopters sitting in West Pakistan, we have to wait for helicopters to come for relief operations from across the earth, from the United States, France and other foreign countries. Whilst China, the United States, USSR, the United Kingdom and other foreign countries were offering us assistance within a couple of days of the disaster being made public, it took our Central Government 10 days to allot Rs 5 crores for relief of the cyclone affected victims. If the Chinese and U.S. offer are evaluated at the market rate of foreign exchange, their financial assistance would exceed that extended by the Central Government. Whilst individual and charitable organisations the world over are raising funds for relief, the '22 families' who have prospered on the blood of our people have yet to make any significant contribution to-

wards relief. Indeed the textile mills of West Pakistan which have exploited Bangladesh as their principal market, have not even donated a yard of cloth for the shrouds of the dead. Is this why we have spent 72 per cent of our common resources in West Pakistan over the last two decades? Is this why we have channelled 60 per cent of our budget to the Defence Services? Is this why the jute growers of Bangladesh have starved so that the capitalists in Karachi and Lyallpur can prosper?

And where are those pillars of national integration, those self-appointed apostles of Islam, Maulana Maudoodi, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, Mian Mumtaz Daulatana, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan and other West Pakistan leaders today? They have not found the time to come even for a day to Bangladesh to extend sympathy and succour to the survivors. Our present experience has only brought into sharp focus and underlines the basic truth that every Bengalee has felt in his bones, that we have been treated so long as a colony and a market. We have been denied our birth-rights as the free citizens of an independent State. All decisions of consequence are made in Rawalpindi or Islamabad. All powers vest in the Central Government and its bureaucrats. It is they whom I accuse today of criminal neglect and discrimination against Bangladesh, which has made us so vulnerable a prey to every vagary of nature. A million of our people are dead. Three millions are today struggling for survival amidst death and devastation. We have lived with floods and cyclones since Independence. Today after 23 years of shared nationhood we are without even plans for flood control. Ten years after the cyclone and tidal bore which had ravaged these same areas, we have to live through the same disaster, magnified a thousand-fold. At that time plans were put forward for building permanent cyclone-proof shelters, for replanning of our coastal villages and improving communications facilities. A full decade later the plans remain buried among a pile of plans which have never been implemented. Rs 20 crores could not be found in ten years for building these cyclone-proof shelters, yet

over Rs 200 crores could be found for building those monuments of luxury and waste in Islamabad. Before a plan for flood control could be prepared, over one billion dollars could be allocated for building the Mangla and Tarbela dams in West Pakistan.

We are confirmed today in our conviction that if we are to save the people of Bangladesh from the ravages of nature and from their fellowmen, we must attain full regional autonomy on the basis of the Six point /Eleven-point formula. We must have plenary powers to manage our economy. It is only when we can wrest away power from the ruling coterie and attain full regional autonomy on the basis of the Six-point/Eleven-point formula that we can expect to solve our urgent problems, be they those of economic development, flood control or those of reconstructing the villages and rehabilitating the people ravaged by the cyclone.

Immediate measures must be taken to provide food, shelter, clothing, medicine and drinking water to every survivor in the coastal areas. A delay of a few more days will result in there being no survivors left to take relief to. A people's Government could have mobilised thousands of volunteers to ensure rapid and effective distribution of relief materials to those in need of it. Bureaucrats would not have dared to be as apathetic, as indifferent and as callous as they have been, if they had had to account for their actions to a people's Government.

If we are to save our people from the scourge of another cyclone and tidal bore, a massive programme of reconstruction must be undertaken. This will involve the construction of an extensive system of coastal embankments, of an adequate network of cyclone-proof shelters, of better warning and communication facilities. The survivors should be grouped into cooperatives through which they should be supplied with cattle and power tillers to replace the cattle that they have lost. They should thus also be provided with deep tubewells to produce winter crops, seeds and other agricultural inputs necessary to enable

them to start a new life. But all this can only be done, if we can attain full regional autonomy. We pledge today that what has happened to our brethren in the coastal areas must not be allowed ever to happen again. This historic disaster has demonstrated to the world the tragic plight of the 70 million people of Bangladesh. The feeling now pervades not just in towns and amongst the educated, but in every village home, in every slum, in those islands amongst their dead, that we must rule ourselves. We must make the decisions which matter. We must decide how our resources are re-utilised. We must decide where to raise money. We must decide how our funds will be used. We will no longer suffer the arbitrary rule of the bureaucrats, the capitalists and the feudal interests of West Pakistan.

Power must be won by the people whether it be through elections, or if the elections are aborted, through the strength of an awakened people. The people have already voted in their hearts and in their minds. They have had enough of 'strong centres'. They have had enough of the crimes committed in the name of 'national integration'. The urge of the people of Bangladesh for autonomy cannot be denied. For those of the rulers who think that the people's will can be ignored, let them be warned. Bangladesh is now awake. It will give its verdict at the polls, if the polls are not frustrated. If the polls are frustrated, the people of Bangladesh, will owe it to the million who have died, to make the supreme sacrifice of another million lives, if need be, so that we can live as a free people and so that Bangladesh can be the master of its own destiny.

Morning News,
Dacca, November 27, 1970

3

A Historic Verdict

The general elections to Pakistan's National Assembly were held on December 7, 1970 throughout the country, except in the cyclone-affected areas. On this day the Awami League won 151 out of 153 seats from Bangladesh and of 291 seats for the whole country. The Awami League Chief was elected from two Dacca constituencies simultaneously.

The elections were held on the basis of universal adult franchise. Representation was decided, for the first time in Pakistan, on the basis of population.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman expressed his own and his party's gratitude to the people at a press conference held at the Awami League central office at Dacca on December 9, 1970. As the leader of the majority party in Pakistan, he included all the people of Pakistan in his address when he added *Joi Pakistan* to *Joi Bangla* at the end of the statement. The full text of the statement in English read out by the Sheikh is reproduced here.

Our people have recorded a historic verdict. They won for themselves the right to do so by waging a relentless struggle, in the course of which thousands laid down their lives and countless persons suffered long years of persecution. We are grateful

to Almighty *Allah* for having crowned the people's struggle with its first great victory. We salute the memory of our martyrs, and congratulate our people—our heroic students, workers and peasants—who struggled on in the face of ruthless persecution, so that one day we may live in real freedom.

The resounding victory of the Awami League is in fact the victory of the suffering millions of Bangladesh. We are overwhelmed by the love of our people—our students, our workers and our peasants—who have amply demonstrated that the Awami League is their party. We are confident that they will reaffirm this fact in the election to the Provincial Assembly on the 17th December. Our party workers who have worked ceaselessly despite severe material handicaps feel duly rewarded. Their reward has been the remarkable demonstration of unity and mass awakening by the people, who presented themselves at every polling centre, to register in a peaceful and disciplined manner, a clear verdict in the general election, which for the people of Bangladesh was above all a referendum on the vital issue of full regional autonomy on the basis of the Six-point/ Eleven-point formula.

Our goals, however, lie ahead and our struggle will continue till these are realised. A constitution securing full regional autonomy on the basis of the Six-point formula has to be framed and implemented in all its aspects. Bangladesh and its toiling masses must be saved from the ravages of nature and the vested interests. The problems of hunger, unemployment and disease, of floods, famines and illiteracy, among a myriad of others cry out for urgent solutions. The million dead and the three million who are struggling to survive in the cyclone affected coastal areas, are cruel reminders to us as much of past exploitation and neglect as of the magnitude of task that face us.

In celebrating the people's victory, we feel that the only befitting response by the people and ourselves is to make a solemn pledge to devote all our energies and resources to save our people from exploitation by the vested interests and from the

scourges of nature. To this end, we pledge to establish a new economic and social order, free from exploitation.

We welcome the first sign of mass awakening, which have manifested themselves in West Pakistan. We call upon the awakening masses in West Pakistan to support us in realising the deeply cherished aspiration of their Bengali brethren. We on our part, assure them of our support in their struggle to emancipate themselves from the oppression of the feudal and other vested interests.

We believe that it is only through massive collective efforts by our people that we can hope to meet the great challenge that confronts us. We derive strength and hope from the fact that our people today are fully conscious of their responsibility to future generations. It is only on the bed-rock of the people's unity that effective programmes for reconstructing our society and for removing injustice between region and region, and between man and man, can be based. We, therefore, appeal to all to transcend past differences and animosities, so that we may move forward in unity towards freedom and prosperity for our toiling millions. *Joi Bangla ! Joi Pakistan !*

Morning News,
Dacca, December 10, 1970

4

End of Era of Exploitation

Immediately after the National Assembly elections, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman went to see for himself, for the second time, the condition of the cyclone battered people in the coastal areas in Bangladesh. During this week-long tour, he covered a vast area by boat and on foot, addressed several meetings every day, supervised his party's relief operations and distributed relief materials himself. The following speech was made on December 11, 1970, at one such public meeting, held at the local High School ground at Sandwip, an off-shore island in Chittagong district. Some extracts from the speech are given here in translation.

I thank you all for the landslide victory of the Awami League. It is not my own *joi* (victory), it is the *joi* of seventy-five million Bengalees. I express my deep gratitude to the people for listening to me and always extending their unflinching support to me ....

I want to repeat my assurance to the people that the Constitution of the country would be prepared on the basis of the Six Points. The Awami League is now the majority party and we shall, *Inshallah,* make a Constitution which will end the era of exploitation of the Bengalees.

I have no doubt that if our people had decided otherwise in the elections, they would have faced worse exploitation. Now I shall see to it that the demands of Bengal cannot be ignored any longer.....

You have shed blood for my release from the jail. I shall not hesitate to repay blood for blood, if necessary.....

I am not in the habit of making false promises. Once I make a promise, I stick to it and the day of fulfilment of one of my promises is nearing. Very soon 25 bigha land-holdings will be exempted from revenue.

I demand that all the *char* areas of Bangladesh should immediately be protected by embankments. I shall not listen any more to the excuse that there is not money for this purpose.

The cyclone affected people should be given every relief in the form of grants and not as loans. Foreign countries have donated materials for relief, hence the question of loan should not arise at all. Besides, the affected people have lost all their belongings and would not be able to repay any loans.

During my visit to other affected areas I noticed that relief was not reaching the people promptly and adequately. I warn that no laxity will be tolerated, no embezzlement of relief money will be allowed. I should like to tell those who are concerned with the relief operations that they should always keep in mind that the days of Ayub Khan have passed. We shall take account of each and every paisa.....

The Pakistan Observer and *Morning News*,
Dacca, December 13, 1970

5

A Constitution to Ensure Justice

On December 11, 1970, President Yahya Khan sent identical messages to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, President of the Awami League, and to Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party, congratulating both on their parties' success in the National Assembly elections. The People's Party had won 83 National Assembly seats in West Pakistan, thus emerging as the majority party in the provinces of Punjab and Sind. In reply to President Yahya's congratulatory message, the Sheikh sent the following telegram on December 14, 1970. The text of the telegram was later released to the press.

I thank you for your kind congratulatory message which I received on my return from Chittagong and other calamity-affected areas of Sandwip. People of Bangladesh in an unprecedented demonstration of unity have given overwhelming verdict in favour of our party's Six-point constitutional formula. Only a Constitution based on the Six-point formula can ensure justice between region and region and man and man. May *Allah* crown with success the efforts of the elected representatives to discharge their historic task of framing the Constitution in accordance with the will of the people.

The Pakistan Observer,
Dacca, December 15, 1970

6

The Unprecedented Victory

Elections to the five Provincial Assemblies of Pakistan were held on December 17, 1970. The Awami League repeated its triumph in Bangladesh by winning 268 out of 279 seats for the province.

The postponed elections of 9 National Assembly seats and 21 Provincial Assembly seats in the cyclone-affected areas were held later on January 17, 1971. The Awami League won all the seats but one. Thus, in Bangladesh, not a single candidate belonging to any of the three Muslim League factions was returned to the National Assembly or to the Provincial Assembly.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman issued a statement to the press in Dacca on December 19, 1970, after the announcement of election results. The full text of the statement is given here.

I am overwhelmed by a deep sense of gratitude to Almighty *Allah* and to my beloved countrymen—the students, workers and peasants—for the unprecedented victory of the Awami League, both in the National and the Provincial elections. I warmly thank the people for having given a historic verdict in favour of our Six-point Programme. We pledge to implement this verdict. There can be no Constitution except the one

which is based on the Six-point Programme.

I view with grave concern the spiralling rise in price of the daily necessities of life, such as rice, edible oil and other essential commodities. This seems to be part of a last desperate bid by the vested interests to create economic chaos and thus to sabotage the peaceful transfer of power to the people. Let them be warned that the people will not spare those responsible for these criminal misdeeds. Indeed the economic system, which allows such exploitation, will have to be replaced by one which caters to the needs of our toiling masses.

I am equally concerned about the grave threat of famine, which faces us as a result of widespread destruction of crops by floods and cyclones. I urge the Government to make immediate arrangements for sufficient stocks and distribution of food-grains, and to inform the people of the action that is being taken in this regard.

I urge that the entire foreign exchange and other resources which have been sent for relief to the survivors of the cyclone ravaged areas in Bangladesh should immediately be placed under exclusive control of the Provincial Government. The exchange remittances received for such purpose should be given the benefit of bonus rate. All foreign exchange received must be earmarked exclusively for utilisation in the cyclone ravaged areas of Bangla-desh. Since there are still persistant reports of bottlenecks including in relief operation, being created by the Central Government bureaucrats, I urge that a white paper be published immediately setting out in detail an account of all the foreign exchange and other resources received so far for relief and of their utilisation. I would urge the President to direct that this should be done immediately in order to remove serious misgivings which have arisen about this matter.

We appreciate that the President has granted an amnesty, releasing persons who had been convicted under Martial Law Regulations of offences arising out of their political activities. We have always been demanding such an amnesty as also the

release of all political prisoners including persons who have been convicted in cases arising out of their political activities. We would urge that the amnesty be implemented in full and that cases against all persons, including students and workers who are in jail in connection with offences arising out of political activities, should also be withdrawn and all political prisoners detained without trial should be released.

Grave and challenging problems, including those of hunger, unemployment, illiteracy and floods, among others, lie ahead. We pledge to do everything possible with the active support and cooperation of the people, so that we may look forward to a better future.

Morning News,
Dacca, December 20, 1970

7

Stop These Cruel Killings

On December 22, 1970, a newly elected member of the Provincial Assembly from Pabna, Mr Ahmad Rafique, belonging to the Awami League, was murdered a few yards away from his home. A few days earlier, Mr Mumtaz, another worker of the Awami League, had been killed in Khulna. The Sheikh was deeply moved by these killings and, on receipt of the news of Ahmad Rafique's assassination, sent a high-powered team of his partymen to Pabna to make on-the-spot enquiries. Meanwhile, he issued a press statement in Dacca on December 24, 1970 and announced his decision to visit Pabna within two or three days. Following is the full text of the original statement.

I am overwhelmed with grief at the cruel killings which have struck down at the prime of their life two of our most valued members, who were fearless and dedicated fighters in the people's struggle. Ahmad Rafique's heroic role was duly recognised by the people of Pabna, who elected him an MPA. Mumtaz was one of our most active workers in Khulna. I offer my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families of those two martyrs who are the victims of what were obviously cold-blooded murders, perpetrated by conspirators and enemies of the people.

The people know the anti-people elements who are behind such inhuman plots. I call upon the Government forthwith to take urgent and effective measures to bring these vicious criminals to book. The failure of the Government to act immediately and effectively in this matter may exhaust the people's patience who may themselves rise to strike back at these anti-people elements.

The Pakistan Observer,
Dacca, December 25, 1970

8

Peace Despite Provocation

Violence erupted in Pabna town in reaction to the murder of the Awami League MPA, Mr Ahmad Rafique. There were clashes between workers belonging to different parties for three or four days, and many persons were seriously injured.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman visited Pabna two days after the murder. On December 25, 1970 he appealed for peace at a public meeting held on the Pabna Town Hall Maidan. Before the meeting, he offered prayer at the grave of the deceased MPA and called upon the bereaved family. Extracts in translation from his speech are presented here.

I call upon you to maintain peace despite the grave provocation by so-called revolutionaries through political murders.....

I urge the Government to punish the criminals responsible for the murders of your newly elected MPA Ahmad Rafique and Mumtazuddin of Khulna. The patience of the people of Bangladesh might be exhausted if the Government fails to take action against these anti-social elements. I warn those who are behind such criminal acts that neither the Awami League nor the people of Bangladesh who have voted for Six Points and Eleven

Points are weak. Nothing can be earned except the scorn of the people by such acts. No one can ever accomplish revolution through political murders. I challenge the so-called revolutionaries to confront the Awami League through ballots....

Awami League has given a call for peace despite the loss of two of its dedicated and fearless members, because there are many things ahead of us to be accomplished. I want to reiterate my determination to fulfil the pledges given by my party to the people. This needs extreme restraint against all kinds of provocations.....

I do not believe in Christian charity. I am a Muslim and I know what to do. But you must wait to see what the Government does in this respect.....

I urge you to pray for the salvation of the soul of the deceased.

The Pakistan Observer and *Morning News,*
Dacca, December 26, 1970

9

Develop Bengali Language and Culture

Purbani, a weekly film magazine from Dacca belonging to the pro-Awami League *Ittefaq* group of newspapers, organised a function on December 31, 1970 at a Dacca hotel to mark the sixth anniversary of its foundation. *Purbani* was a strong critic of Pakistan Government's decision to prohibit Tagore songs on Radio and TV. Along with the daily *Ittefaq* and the weekly *Dacca Times*, *Purbani* was banned for a long time during the Ayub regime.

In his address as chief guest at this function, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman reminded the writers present of their obligations towards their language, culture and people. Extracts from this speech are presented here in translation.

The artists, writers and poets must faithfully reflect the hopes and aspirations of the masses. They must write and paint for the people and for the glory of their motherland and its culture.

I appeal to our writers to express themselves freely for the benefit of the people and for the enrichment of the Bengali language and culture. I can assure them that any attempt from any quarter to suppress the creative urge of the artists, poets and writers will be resisted by me and my party. The days of cultural enslavement are over. Writers and artists will no

longer be subjected to writing and singing for a handful of privileged people. They should portray the sufferings of the people of Bangladesh in their works of art....

Cultural enrichment is not possible without effective political power. Bengali culture was unable to develop during the last two decades because the people of Bangladesh had no political power....

After independence, practically nothing was done for the development of Bengali language and culture. Artists, poets and writers were not given any opportunity to address their creative work to the hopes and aspirations of the people. The culture which has no link with the soil can never last long.

In the past, attempts were made to destroy our culture in the name of religion and national integrity. This deliberate plan against Bengali culture had greatly hampered the development of language and culture here. But our people withstood these attempts. You all know the glorious history of the Language Movement....

The Bureau of National Reconstruction was set up by the Government to destroy Bengali language and culture. Even Radio and Television played a negative role in the development of Bengali language and culture. The broadcast of Tagore songs was banned for a long time and even today there are strong reservations on this subject among people at the top. The people will no longer tolerate such conspiracies against their own language and culture. Those days are gone when the anti-Bengali elements had the backing of the administration in sabotaging the cause of Bengali....

The Pakistan Observer and *Morning News,*
Dacca, January 1, 1971

10

The Verdict of The People is Final

For the first time in the history of parliamentary democracy, elected representatives went to the people to renew their pledges before taking oath formally in Parliament, when all the Awami League members recently elected to the National and Provincial Assemblies took their oaths before a gathering of about two million people at the Race Course in Dacca on January 3, 1971.

The 120-foot long dais constructed for this meeting was designed as a boat, the election symbol of the Awami League. The sail of the boat, hoisted by Mujib, was the green map of East Pakistan carrying the words 'JOI BANGLA'.

Incidentally, the traditional venue of public meeting in Dacca is the historic Paltan Maidan. But since 1969 or so, the venue had to be shifted to the Race Course for the Sheikh's meetings to accommodate the hundreds of thousands who generally turned up to listen to him.

After administering the oath to 151 MNAs and 267 MPAs, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made his policy speech as party chief, touching upon all major issues of regional and national interest. Extracts from this speech are given here in translation.

Before I begin, I should like to pay tribute to our martyrs who had sacrificed their valuable lives in different mass movements

in Bangladesh, particularly in the Language Movement of 1952, June 7 Movement of 1966, and the mass upsurge of 1968-69. I, along with the MNAs and MPAs, promise today that the blood of the martyrs would not be allowed to go in vain. After June 7 last year, this is my first appearance before you at the Race Course. The elections are over and the people of Bangladesh have won in the first phase of their struggle through elections. But you should not think that the demands of the people have been fulfilled with this election alone. Rather this is the beginning of a long struggle.....

We are the representatives of the people and we shall frame a Constitution. To quote our great leader H.S. Suhrawardy, in the affairs of the nation the verdict of the people is final. If anyone interferes in this verdict, there will be bloodshed and an uprising which none will be able to control.

The future constitution of the country would be framed on the basis of the Six-point and Eleven-point Programmes. Referendum was held on these programmes. These are no more my party's programmes. Awami League cannot amend it now. None would be able to stop us in framing a Constitution on the basis of the Six-point Programme.

At the same time, in spite of being the absolute majority party in the National Assembly, I would not like to say that we do not want cooperation from the representatives of West Pakistan in framing the Constitution. Surely we want their cooperation. But there could be no compromise on the fundamental matters of policy.

We will frame a Constitution for the country as we are the representatives of the majority of the people of this country. The people of Pakistan will accept that Constitution. Those who want to place an obstacle in its way will be eliminated.....

In the past we were dubbed as Hindu agents and were treated as second class citizens because we spoke Bengali. Our loyalty to this country was questioned. We suffered many an injustice. We know how it is to be the victims of injustice.

Therefore we would do justice to the people of West Pakistan. Although we formed the majority in population, we allowed Karachi to be the capital of Pakistan. From the quota of East Pakistan, six West Pakistan leaders were given Constituent Assembly seats. But what did we get in return? Injustice. Out of the total foreign earnings 80 per cent went to West Pakistan, only 20 per cent came to Bangladesh. Likewise, in the central services, the representation of Bangladesh was 15 per cent and in the Armed Forces 10 per cent.

In the recent devastation by cyclone, only one helicopter was available in Bangladesh for relief work. My struggle is against the vested interests and big industrialists. The poor people of Sind, Baluchistan and the Frontier are as dear to me as the people of Bangladesh. So even though we are in the majority, we are fully conscious of our responsibility to the people of that wing.....

My party, if it forms the Government, would introduce socialist economy in the country. We would no longer allow the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer.

I reiterate my pre-election stand that the banks, insurance companies and jute trade would be nationalised. The shares of big industries and factories would be distributed among the workers. For 23 years poor people have been exploited by the pot-bellied gentlemen. The Awami League would bring this exploitation to an end.

Land holdings up to 25 Bighas under an Awami League Government would be exempted from taxes. Similar steps will be taken in West Pakistan. The *Khas* land and the excess land owned by rich people would be redistributed among the landless peasants and the evacuees for rehabilitation. I can assure the peasants and workers that the Awami League would not betray their cause as, I believe, no capitalist or industrialist would dare purchase the Awami Leaguers. On the other hand, if any Awami Leaguer including myself betrays your cause, I would ask you to bury him alive.

There was a deficit of 17 lakh tons of foodgrains this year in the Province. We cannot depend on the import of food any longer. Steps must be taken to increase the cultivation of winter crops by improving the irrigation facilities.

Whenever the question of flood control was raised in the past, the plea of non-availability of funds was given. I will show how money can be arranged for flood control.

About ten lakh people were killed in the recent cyclone and tidal bore in the coastal areas. I have noticed that the casualties were comparatively fewer in those areas covered by the coastal embankment. In Monpura island, which is not covered by the embankment, only six thousand people could escape the disaster, out of the total population of twenty-six thousand. I take this opportunity to demand an account of the funds received for embankment and flood control since 1962.....

We are the elected representatives of the people. It is our responsibility to execute the future plans. I urge the Government not to execute the Fourth Five Year Plan. Keep it in the iron safe now. We shall handle it. The shortfall of the Third Plan which amounts to Rs 1,100 crores must be spent first in Bangladesh. The Fourth Plan should be formulated keeping in view the interests of the low paid employees, students and teachers and the needs of Bangladesh. We believe in world peace and peaceful co-existence with all countries, especially neighbours like India, China, Russia, Iran, Afghanistan and Burma. Our party stands for a policy of 'friendship with all and malice towards none'. If any dispute arises between countries, we should solve the same amicably and peacefully. We want to settle the Kashmir and Farakka disputes with India peacefully. We in Pakistan will always be ready to help the Arabs in liberating the occupied territory.

I urge the big powers to keep away from the arms race and stop wasteful expenditure on the production of armaments. If they divert this money and resources towards helping the poor people, these people will remain ever grateful to them.

Even if 10 per cent of the money now being spent on armaments is spent for the poor people, poverty could have been wiped out from the face of the earth. This would enhance the prestige of the big powers. The days of victory with the force of arms are over and the time has come when victory can be achieved through love and affection alone.....

I congratulate President Yahya Khan on the fulfilment of his promise to hold the general elections. At the same time I would like to draw the attention of the administration to the anti-people activities of a section of officers. Some Government officials had met in Dacca immediately after the polls to annul the verdict. I would request the President to make these officials refrain from indulging in conspiracies. If the Government fails to put these conspiracies to an end, we will do it with force....

I would ask the Government officers to change their habits. You should never forget that the money, on which you live, comes from the poor people on whom you exercise all your powers. Give up corruption. Yahya Khan has sacked 303 officials. But we shall not do that. We shall merely point out the corrupt officials to the people. We shall then ask the people to clean up those who are corrupt.....

Revolution cannot be brought about through stabbings and killings in the darkness of night. I warn the so-called terrorists, their agents and their advisers against acts of violence. I ask my partymen to remain prepared to face them. Organise the party in every village. Make lathis (sticks) from bamboos and *sundari* wood to resist this kind of terrorism. But you should not use the lathis until I ask you to do so. You should not do anything which may disturb peace. The need of the hour is peace and that is why we are tolerant in the face of provocations like the killing of our partymen.....

The vested interests have started price manipulation to foil the people's victory in the elections. It was immediately after the polls that the prices of essential commodities started soaring. The intention of these vested interests is very clear. They want

to create a situation in which we shall not be able to do anything for the people. If a situation of economic chaos is created in the next three or four months, a movement would be built up and you can understand what I mean....

The Ayub regime had given birth to many cartels. These will not be allowed to continue. The big industrialists had helped the other parties in the election so that the Awami League may not win. Money was poured into the province from outside. The holy name of Islam was sold for political purposes. Cries were raised that Islam was in danger. The Islamic United Front was formed and their agents here tried to form an alliance among four parties. But the people of Bangladesh have successfully weeded out these parasites.....

Christians, Hindus and Buddhists should enjoy equal rights with Muslims. There should be no oppression aimed at them. The women must also be assured of their equal share and they would no more be allowed to remain as second grade citizens....

I advise the refugees to merge with the local people. After living in Bangladesh for 23 years you are refugees no longer. You are all Bengalees. You are our brothers. But you must identify yourself with the soil on which you live.....

I demand the release of all political prisoners immediately. In the event of Awami League's coming to power, all the political prisoners will be released. So the Government should not hesitate in releasing them now....

I am not interested in being the Prime Minister. Prime Ministers come and go. But the love and respect the people have showered on me is the only thing which I would cherish all through my life. Neither the jails of Ayub Khan and Monem Khan nor a Conspiracy Case could daunt me. But the overwhelming love of the people makes me feel weak....

The Pakistan Observer and *Morning News*,
Dacca, January 4, 1971
and personal notes at the meeting.

11

Write The True History of Bengal

East Pakistan Students' League, the largest student organisation in Bangladesh and the students' front of the Awami League, celebrated the 23rd anniversary of its foundation in 1971. During the first few years after partition, the East Pakistan Students' League was the only organisation of the progressive students. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, one of the founders of the EPSL, attended a function organised on January 4, 1971 as a part of the anniversary celebrations at Ramna Green, Dacca's beautiful park where most of the civic receptions are held. Besides a large number of former Presidents and General Secretaries of the organisation, educationists, political leaders, writers, journalists and other intellectuals were present at the function.

In the speech delivered on this occasion as chief guest, the Sheikh urged Bengalee writers to record the true history of Bengal and the Bengalees, to counteract the distortions presented in new books sponsored by the rulers of Pakistan. A protest movement organised by school-going boys and girls had forced the Government in 1970 to withdraw such a book from the syllabus. The Sheikh's Bengali nationalism is apparent in this speech. Extracts in translation are reproduced here.

.....Our people, particularly the students and the youths, should study history and know their past. One who fails to

know one's past would never be able to become a true lover of one's homeland.....

The true history of our glorious past has not been recorded by our writers as yet. I appeal to our writers to record the true history of the struggle of the Bengalees, because the time has come when our younger generation should know the actual history of the past sacrifices and resistance movements.

In the past, organised attempts were made to distort the history of the people of Bangladesh. Attempts were also made to destroy the Bengali language, culture and tradition. When an onslaught was directed against the Bengali language and attempts were made to impose the Arabic script on us, we resisted through mass movements.

The outcome of the election demonstrates clearly that Bengalees will always live as Bengalees. In the past, the people of Bengal were subjected to humiliation whenever they tried to assert themselves as Bengalees. The resources of Bengal were exploited in the past. Large cities like Calcutta, Bombay, Madras were built with the resources of Bengal. The Dalmias, Birlas, Saigols, Dawoods and Adamjees became richer and richer while the poor Bengalees became poorer and poorer.....

The ruling coterie also made repeated attacks on Bengali literature. They even dared to make changes in the works of Tagore and Nazrul to suit their purpose. This sort of distortion was never witnessed before in any civilised country.

Now all restrictions and bans will go. Write the true histroy of Bangladesh and its people without any fear....

Although the Muslims of undivided Bengal alone gave a unequivocal verdict in favour of the establishment of Pakistan in the 1946 elections, the contributions of the leaders of Bengal were never given due recognition in our national history.

The rise of the Bengalees against the Britishers at Barrackpore and the raid conducted by them on the Chittagong Armoury, are among the hundreds of examples of our sacrifices and contributions to the Freedom Movement. The Awami League will

declare Jalalabad in Chittagong a national monument in memory of those martyrs who fought to overthrow the British rule in India.....

The student community should uphold this tradition of struggle and carry on their fight with renewed vigour for the establishment of a society free from exploitation. But what is most needed is unity among the student community. As the future guides to the destiny of the nation, they have a great task ahead to accomplish.

You all know the role of East Pakistan Students' League in the realisation of the rights and demands of the people of Bengal. I appeal to my student brothers to build the Students' League into a strong and deep-rooted organisation. Don't allow divisions and disunity among yourselves. It will weaken the entire organisation.

The Pakistan Observer and *Morning News,*
Dacca, January 5, 1971

12

We Alone are Competent to Form the Government

The postponed elections of the nine National Assembly and the twenty-one Provincial Assembly seats in the cyclone affected areas in Bangladesh, were held on January 17, 1971. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman toured the Southern coastal belt from January 9 to 11 on the final leg of his election campaign. A few hours before the Sheikh's departure from Dacca, a young man with a dagger concealed on his person, was caught at the residence of the Sheikh by the Awami League volunteers while he was trying to approach the Sheikh's room. The suspected assassin was later handed over to the police. The next day President Yahya Khan sent a message to Mujib expressing his relief at the foiled attempt on the Sheikh's life. The President flew to Dacca on January 11 with a view to have talks with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Mujib cut short his tour of the coastal areas and returned to Dacca the same day.

During this tour, Mujib addressed a number of meetings every day. On January 10 and 11, he spoke at Patharghata, Amtali, Khepupara, Galachipa and Patuakhali. The following are extracts in translation from his speech made on January 11, 1971 at Patuakhali, the headquarters of a new district created by bifurcating Barisal district.

....According to the verdict of the people, my party alone is competent to form the Government both at the Centre and in Bangla-

desh. Our people have voted in favour of the Awami League's Six-point Programme. I would like to reaffirm that framing the Constitution on the basis of the Six-point Programme would ensure the rights of the common man.....

I can assure you once again that the Awami League would continue their struggle to give you your rights. This time the exploiters have been stunned to realise the awareness of the people of Bangladesh. Had they foreseen the result of conceding voting rights to the people, they would certainly not have allowed all of you to vote.

Having lost in the elections, they have adopted methods to suppress the voice of the people of Bengal. Mr Ahmad Rafique, Awami League's MPA-elect from Pabna, and Mr. Mumtaz, another party worker in Khulna, were assassinated immediately after the polls. You must have heard that an assassin was caught inside my Dacca residence the other day before he could fulfil his mission.

But one need not be afraid of death since no one is immortal. I will carry on my struggle to achieve our goal.They are mistaken who think that they can serve the country by killing people like thieves and dacoits in the darkness of night. I know these so-called revolutionaries and reactionaries. They will realise the consequences of their misdeeds very soon. These elements neither have faith in the people nor do they care for public opinion.....

The exploiters and vested interests planned conspiracies one after another to suppress the demands of the people. They did not hesitate to dismiss the popularly elected ministry of *Sher-e-Bangla*, the late A.K. Fazlul Haq, and to jail the late H.S. Suhrawardy at the fag end of his life, although he had contributed a great deal to the creation of Pakistan.....

Bangladesh has suffered much in the services and in the economic field. Our resources were exploited and Bangalees were denied the right to enjoy the fruits of freedom....

The former President Ayub Khan took the country over

through the back door and ruled ruthlessly after dis-franchising the people, although it was through the votes of the common man that Pakistan appeared on the map of the world. We cannot forget the sacrifices of those who laid down their lives to fight against oppression. I was jailed a number of times and later was implicated in the concocted Agartala Conspiracy Case for taking a firm stand against suppression and exploitation. Many Awami League leaders were also jailed and oppressed in other ways....

In the last December elections, our people have shown unequivocal faith in the Awami League. I am confident that the same thing will happen when you too go to the polls. I request you to return the Awami League nominees not as individual candidates but as Awami Leaguers and my representatives. I can assure you that they would be answerable to you....

Some discarded Convention Muslim Leaguers are contesting here against the Awami League nominees. Their fellow partymen have faced crushing defeats at the hands of AL candidates throughout Bangladesh. In the total rout of anti-people self-styled leaders only Mr. Nurul Amin escaped the notice of the people. But this is the end, and no further chance must be given to these people who acted as lackeys of the vested interests during the last 23 years....

Dawn,
Karachi, January 12, 1971

13

Sing the Songs of Revolution

Purbo Bangla Sangeet Shilpi Samaj, an organisation of the music artistes of East Bengal, arranged a reception in honour of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on January 24, 1971 at the Institute of Engineers, Dacca's best auditorium. The speech he made on that occasion is one of his most significant speeches on Bengali culture.

After the Indo-Pak conflict of 1965, the Ayub regime seized the opportunity of banning Tagore on Radio and Television in Pakistan. Some writers and artistes, enjoying or longing for some favour of the Government, supported this move of the regime by signing a statement. A few artistes who had signed the statement were present at the reception and two or three were even sitting on the dais. A straightforward man like Mujib did not hesitate to criticise them for neglecting their duty to the people and their culture. Some extracts in translation from his speech are presented here.

....The growth of a people-oriented culture, which will reflect the hopes and aspirations of the people in the country, is very necessary. I consider political and economic freedom as one with social and cultural freedom. One is inseparably linked with the other. Political freedom without economic freedom

is meaningless and without these two, social and cultural freedom is not possible.....

Our writers, authors, poets and artistes should create a culture which will reflect the life of the masses—their sorrows and sufferings, their joys and aspirations.....

Music is also meant for inspiring the people in their struggle. You have sung many songs of love and peace. Now the time has come when you will have to sing the songs of revolution and songs of the down-trodden. If you fail to do that, you will not be able to win the hearts of the people.

During the days of our Independence struggle, poets, artistes and literateurs had whole-heartedly participated in the movement through their writings and performances. Our great poets Tagore and Nazrul inspired people by their writings.

The coterie and ruling cliques in the bygone days had made deliberate attempts to destroy Bengali culture. They knew that the best way to destroy a people is to destroy its culture and heritage. Derogatory remarks were made about Bengalees and their language and culture. At times it was even said that Bengalees had no culture of their own and they were influenced by alien culture. I hate those Bengalees who try to imitate Urdu-speaking people to prove their aristocracy in the society.

I condemn those writers, authors, poets and artistes who failed to associate themselves with the people's struggle for their rights during the last twenty-three years. While the people were struggling against the Ayub regime, some of the writers and authors eulogised the system of basic democracies, discarded by the people. Besides, some were writing communal songs and even tried to introduce a new culture through the Bureau of National Reconstruction. But the peasants and the workers made tremendous sacrifices for asserting the rights of the people, including the artistes and the writers....

Since 1947, the Bengalees virtually became slaves and were being treated as second class citizens. The first phase of the Language Movement in 1948 was not only a movement concern-

ing language, but it was a revolt against the treatment of the Bengalees as second class citizens.

I have no language to condemn those who had made attempts to strangle Bengali language and culture in the name of Islam and national integration. Those people had gone so far as to distort the works of Nazrul Islam. The situation has now changed and one can speak Bengali fearlessly and can freely develop one's culture. You should now freely carry on your cultural activities. If there is any attempt to create any obstacle, seven crores of Bengalees will be with you to clear the obstacle.

I fully realise that the writers, poets and artistes are not getting due respect and honour in the society. But how can one be respected by the people if one fails to show due respect to eminent authors and poets like Tagore and Nazrul and patriots like Suryya Sen? Where does the Bengali language stand if we exclude Tagore and Nazrul? If we can achieve provincial autonomy on the basis of the Six and Eleven-point Programmes, you will get everything and everything will be yours. When a People's Government is formed, your problems will be solved according to your advice. A National Academy of Fine Arts will be established and none can stop it....

When I advocate the free development of Bengali language and culture, I would similarly concede to the Punjab, Sind and other provinces the same right to develop their own language and culture....

We want cooperation from others. We hope we will get that. But we are not weak and we are no longer afraid of anyone....

The Pakistan Observer and *Morning News*,
Dacca, January 25, 1971

14

People Should be Fully Alert

An Indian Airlines passenger plane was hijacked by two Kashmiri youths, Hashim and Ashraf, and forced to land in Lahore Airport Kashmiri on January 31, 1971. Thehijackers, publicised by Pakistan as Kashmiri freedom fighters, allowed the passengers and the crew to disembark, but themselves stayed on guard inside the plane.

Pakistani authorities apparently failed to persuade the two youths to surrender the plane and did not use force out of their professed concern for the safety of the aircraft. Enthusiastic West Pakistanis crowded the airport premises to hail the deed and urge their Government not to return the plane to India. On February 2, the hijackers blew up the plane, watched by Pakistani security staff.

While many West Pakistani leaders, including Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, hailed the blowing-up, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman sensed a deep conspiracy in the whole affair. He issued the following statement to the press in Dacca on February 3, 1971.

I was surprised to hear that the hijacked Indian plane at Lahore has been blown up. While the hijacking was a *fait accompli*, its subsequent blowing up must be deplored. Prompt and effective steps by the authorities could have been taken to prevent its occurrence. It should have been realised that, at this critical

juncture in the nation's life, the creation of abnormal conditions can only serve the interests of the saboteurs and conspirators against the people.

The people should be fully alert to resist all attempts by the vested interests to exploit this occurrence in order to create abnormal conditions with the ulterior purpose of sabotaging the peaceful transfer of power to the people.

I would urge the Government to hold an enquiry into this matter and to take effective measures to prevent interested quarters from exploiting this situation for their nefarious ends.

The Pakistan Observer,
Dacca, February 4, 1971

15

We Take A Fresh Vow

On February 15, 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman inaugurated a two-day joint session of the newly elected members of the National and Provincial Assemblies belonging to the Awami League at the Institute of Engineers, Dacca. This was the first formal meeting of the MNAs and MPAs after the elections. On the previous day, the Working Committee of the All-Pakistan Awami League had met in Dacca.

In this speech, the Party Chief reminded the members of their responsibility towards the people and reiterated that the good of the people and of the country lay in a Constitution framed on the basis of the Six-point and Eleven-point Programmes. The top West Pakistani leaders of his party were also present in the meeting. The Sheikh also sought cooperation from the members of the National Assembly from West Pakistan. President Yahya Khan had announced on February 13 that the National Assembly would meet in Dacca on March 3. Earlier Mujib had expressed his anxiety over the delay in convening the National Assembly, and Yahya's announcement came just before the Awami League session.

This speech was in Bengali. But the Sheikh switched over to English whenever he wanted to convey some point particularly to the West Pakistani members present. Extracts, in the original as well as in translation, are given here.

Before two million people we pledged to frame the Constitution on the basis of the Six-point and Eleven-point Programmes. Under no circumstances shall we go back on our promises. We firmly believe that the good of the people and of the country lies in the proposed Constitution. It is on this basis that we can live together.....

Any attempt to frustrate the mandate of the people will be met with utmost resistance from the people of Bangladesh. The people of Bangladesh are not afraid of guns. They have the guts to face the guns and make sacrifices to protect their rights....

Those who are opposing the Six-point formula as the means for political and economic emancipation of the people of Pakistan know fully well its merits and backgrounds. Since its launching in 1966, it has been scrutinised and criticised in various quarters. Those who say that they do not understand it even after the elections, are only pretending ignorance. The proposed Constitution will remove all misunderstandings and create the conditions for living together peacefully and in a dignified manner.

The Six-point Programme is in no way directed against the poor of West Pakistan. It is against the exploiters of both the wings. Unfortunately, the number of exploiters is much larger in West Pakistan than in Bangladesh. The demand for autonomy as envisaged in the Six-point Programme, is not for the people of Bangladesh only, but for the oppressed people of the four provinces in West Pakistan as well. Since my party is in the majority in Pakistan, we consider it our bounden duty to protect the rights of the people of West Pakistan and save them from the exploiters.

Though my party is in absolute majority in Pakistan, it still seeks the cooperation of others in framing the Constitution. In a democracy, it is always the decision of the majority that is considered to be the will of the people. I hope the decision of the majority will be accepted in framing the Constitution as well.

Following the referendum on the Six-point Programme

in the last general election in which people gave their verdict in its favour, neither Sheikh Mujibur Rahman nor the Awami League can make any addition and alteration to it.

Those who want a consensus ignoring the will of the majority in a democracy are working against the verdict of the people. Those who do not accept the will of the majority are against democracy. The attitude of many of them smacks of fascism. This is an unhealthy sign in politics.

The people of Pakistan have given the Awami League the right to frame the Constitution. We do not want to accept this right as charity from anyone. We make it clear that none will be able to make us accept anything other than a Constitution based on the Six-point and Eleven-point Programmes. This cannot be done even at the point of guns.....

So long politics in Pakistan had been the politics of conspiracy, intrigue and cliques. Conspiracy against the people and their interest has not stopped even after the landslide victory of the Awami League which is pledged to put an end to all kinds of conspiracy, corruption and exploitation. Just think of the audacity of these conspirators who are trying to frustrate such a a victory of the people! They are playing with fire. They will burn their fingers because they do not know that they can no longer suppress the people who are awake. My party is capable of putting an end to conspiracy in politics. This vile element in politics must be eliminated totally so that the people could be saved from frequent cliques and intrigues of the vested interests. I ask my party MNAs and MPAs to be fully prepared to launch mass movements and make sacrifices for the cause of the people...

The abnormal rise in the prices of essential commodities just after the announcement of the results of the polls is yet another conspiracy by the vested interests to create conditions against the peaceful transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people. The purpose of this conspiracy is to shatter the economy of the poor and the middle class, and to make the Awami League discredited as soon as it takes over power.

Problems after problems are being created by ruining the economy of the country, by causing inflation through issuing bank notes without security, and in many other ways.

The vested interests and the ruling clique are in league in this conspiracy which is aimed at creating chaos and confusion in both the national and the international spheres.

I have definite information that a section of the bureaucracy in league with the vested interests is trying to mobilise the West Pakistan members of the National Assembly to confront me and my party. The primary concern of my party is the realisation of the rights of the people. Coming to power is of secondary importance to me and also to my party which is totally wedded to the cause of the toiling masses.

I request President Yahya Khan not to listen to the advice of the conspirators but to see that the Constitution is framed and power peacefully transferred to the elected representatives of the people. I praise Yahya Khan for fulfilling his promises and accepting some of the demands of the people..... I am happy that the Assembly is going to meet on March 3 at Dacca.....

My talks with Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who came as a representative of Sind and Punjab, were neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory. I was, however, satisfied with my talks with the Council Muslim League leader, Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, Maulana Noorani of Jamiat-e-Ulema-e Pakistan and some representatives from Bahawalpur.

My talks with the West Pakistani leaders seeking their co-operation in framing the Constitution on the basis of Six-point and Eleven-point Programmes have not been completed. If need arises, I will discuss the matter with them and others again. However, I do not understand what is there still to discuss regarding the Six Points.....

I request my partymen from West Pakistan now present here to convey to the poor suffering people of that wing that my party will always stand by them. So far as the exploiters are concerned, we shall fight them to the last; so far as the ruling

clique is concerned, we shall fight to the last; and so far as that ambitious section of bureaucracy is concerned, we shall fight to the last....

The key to democracy is now in our hands because we are in the majority. In the name of the *Shaheeds* (martyrs) of the 1952 Bengali Language Movement and all those who sacrificed their lives for the cause of the people's rights, we take a fresh vow that their sacrifices will not go in vain. We will not disappoint the oppressed people of our country.....

Morning News, Dacca and *Dawn,* Karachi,
February 16, 1971

16

Bengali at All Levels

Shaheed Day is celebrated every year with due solemnity in Bangladesh to pay homage to the martyrs of the Language Movement of 1952. The demand for Bengali as a State language originated immediately after the creation of Pakistan, and the first meeting on the language issue was held on December 6, 1947 in the Dacca University Campus. The students' meeting condemned the resolution of an Education Conference in Karachi advocating Urdu as the only State language of Pakistan. A cut motion demanding Bengali as one of the State languages was tabled before the Pakistan Parliament in its first session by a prominent East Pakistani member, Mr Dhirendranath Dutta of Congress. The Parliament discussed the motion on February 25, 1948 and rejected it as a move made by the Hindus to bring about the disintegration of Pakistan. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the first Governor General of Pakistan, said in a convocation address at the University of Dacca on March 24, 1948 that "there shall be one language to maintain co-ordination among the provinces of Pakistan and that language will be only Urdu and no other language. Naturally, the State language will be Urdu." The Father of the Nation's speech was interrupted by shouts of 'no' 'no' from the students. It is interesting to note that while Bengali was then the language of 56% of the total population of Pakistan, Urdu was the mother tongue of only 7% of the people. The Language Movement in Bangladesh gained momentum from the very day of Mr Jinnah's address and reached its peak on February 21, 1952. The police opened fire on

a peaceful procession of the students near the East Pakistan Assembly House in Dacca and the black roads of Dacca turned red with the blood of Barkat, Rafiq, Salam, Jabbar and many unknown martyrs. Mr. Nurul Amin, the then Chief Minister of East Pakistan, defended the police action on the floor of the Assembly which was then in session. The legitimate movement of the students of Bangladesh was later crowned with success when in 1954 Bengali was accepted as a State language in Pakistan along with Urdu.

In 1971, the Bengali Academy of Dacca, which was a positive outcome of the Language Movement, organised a week-long programme to observe the Shaheed Day. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the chief guest at the inaugural function which was presided over by the Bengali Academy Director, Mr Kabir Chaudhury, on February 15, 1971 at the Academy premises. Here are some extracts of his speech in translation.

.....The conspiracy against the Bengali language was first hatched on March 11, 1948 when the Constituent Assembly sitting in Karachi passed a resolution in favour of Urdu as the State language. At that time, only Mr Dhirendranath Dutta of Comilla had objected to the resolution. I wonder what our Bengali Muslim leaders were doing at the time.

The movement of 1952 was not only a movement for language, but also for the establishment of social, economic, cultural and political rights of the people of Bangladesh.....

While paying homage to the *Shaheeds* of the Language Movement, I would like to declare that Bengali will be introduced at all levels the day my party is inducted into power. We shall not wait for the evolution of a glossary. Bengali will be introduced in whatever shape it is today.

But I am still sceptical about my party assuming power although it has a mandate from the people and holds an absolute majority in both the National and the Provincial Assemblies....

The then ruling clique of the country had maligned the people of East Bengal as the stooges of Hindus and agents of

West Bengal for demanding Bengali as one of the State languages of the country. The magnanimity of the people of East Bengal was proved when they accepted Urdu as the other State language of the country.....

Steady onslaughts have been made against the language and culture of the people of Bangladesh by the ruling cliques during the last twentythree years. Only the youths of this country had resisted all such heinous moves. May I ask, what you men of letters, were doing during these days? Posterity will never forgive the people who had collaborated with the ruling cliques.....

Bengali nationalism is a great force today. The Bengalees have awakened and no power on earth can any longer suppress or exploit them....

This week is significant for another reason. During this week, at the time of mass upsurge of 1969, Sergeant Zahoorul Huq and Dr Shamsuzzoha also laid down their lives.....

I condemn the role of a number of teachers of the Dacca University during the Ayub-Monem regime. These teachers, for personal benefits, had not even tried to resist the reign of terror let loose by Monem Khan. A negligible number of teachers, who had the courage to criticise the Monem regime, were either insulted or forced to leave the University. Had the teachers been more conscious of their roles, there would not have been such a situation in the country.

I urge our authors, poets and playwrights to write without fear or favour. Write things which will reflect the hopes and aspirations of the peasants, the workers and the labourers....

We firmly believe in a socialist economy and a society free from exploitation. We will not stay in power unless we can translate the hopes of the people that have been reposed in us....

The Pakistan Observer and *Morning News*,
Dacca, February 16, 1971

17

Difficult Days Ahead

The Language Movement of 1952 was not only a movement for the recognition of Bengali as one of the State languages, but a movement for the establishment of the legitimate rights of the Bengalees too. This Bengali nationalism, of which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the greatest living symbol, received unprecedented support from the 75 million people of Bangladesh in the general elections of 1970. In a sense, 1952 paved the way for 1970 and 1971. Naturally, Shaheed Day was observed in 1971 in an atmosphere of peoples' victory. Many major organisations chalked out week-long programmes.

At midnight of February 20-21, 1971 a torch procession was brought out in Dacca from the Central Shaheed Minar, a martyrs' memorial erected exactly at the spot where the police opened fire on the students' procession in 1952. Before the procession started, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addressed a large gathering at the Shaheed Minar. Later he also gave lead to the procession. Extracts from this speech are presented here in translation.

.....Prepare yourselves for supreme sacrifices to establish your rights. We have spilled enough blood since 1952. This time we shall not sacrifice our lives merely to attain martyrdom. We shall be *Gazis* (victors). In the name of the *Shaheeds* of the

language and other movements, I pledge my last drop of blood for the full establishment of the rights of seven crore Bengalees.

The souls of the martyrs are begging you not to turn into cowards in the face of conspiracies to thwart the establishment of the rights of the people of Bangladesh. The conspirators who were responsible for the death of the martyrs of the Language Movement are at their work even today. Conspiracy was there, conspiracy is here still and it will continue in future. But the conspirators should realize that there is a gulf of difference between the Bangladesh of 1952 and the Bangladesh of 1971.....

We do not harbour any ill-feeling towards anyone. We want that Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluchis and Pathans should enjoy their rights fully. But this does not mean that the Bengalees will allow any one any longer to be their masters. Fraternity does not mean servitude, neither does it mean that we should continue as a market or a colony.....

Bengalees are still courting martyrdom, not always before bullets. They are dying of hunger. We do not want to be unjust to anyone. But at the same time we shall no more tolerate any oppression on us. If force is used to block the establishment of our rights, we shall resist any onslaught on our rights.....

I foresee difficult days ahead. I may not be with you always. After all, a man lives only to die. Life is an accident. I do not know when again I shall be able to meet you. But my appeal to you would be to ensure that the people of Bengal are no more deprived of their rights. Let not the blood of the martyrs go in vain. *Shaheed Smriti Amar Hoke !* (Long live the memory of the martyrs !)

Morning News and *The Pakistan Observer*,
Dacca, February 21, 1971

18

Resist Anti-People Forces

Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party, alleged, while speaking at a public meeting in Multan on February 10, 1971 that the Government was making unnecessary delay in handing over power to the elected representatives of the people. On the previous day, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had expressed his anxiety over the delay in convening the National Assembly. On February 13, President Yahya Khan announced that the first session of the Assembly would begin at Dacca on March 3, 1971. On February 15, 1971 Bhutto announced in a press conference in Peshawar his Party's decision to boycott the Assembly session as there was no possibility of any adjustments in the Six-point Programme. While the Awami League had absolute majority in the Assembly, Bhutto, whose party had a strength of 83 members, was demanding that Awami League should come to some terms with his party. Bhutto had a five-hour meeting with President Yahya Khan on February 19, 1971 in Rawalpindi. This was followed by the dissolution of Yahya's Council of Ministers. The President held a special meeting with provincial Governors and Martial Law Administrators on February 22, 1971.

Mujib could anticipate some conspiracy in all these happenings. On February 24, 1971 he came out with a long statement in which he explained his party's position. He also contradicted some mispropaganda launched against him and his Party by the vested interests. The statement, the full text of which appears here

in original, was handed over to the local and foreign newsmen at a press conference in Dacca on February 24, 1971.

The fate of 120 million people is too serious a matter to be trifled with. It is time to call a halt to the kind of political histrionics which the nation has been made to witness during the last week. An artificial crisis is being deliberately fabricated in order to sabotage the making of a Constitution by the elected representatives of the people and the transfer of power to them.

The Awami League, mindful of its responsibility to the people of Pakistan, the majority of whom it represents, had thus far deliberately maintained silence, since it wished to avoid poisoning the atmosphere by bitter controversy. Consistent with its belief in democratic principles and processes, the Awami League has adhered to the view that vital constitutional issues should be resolved and indeed can only be resolved, through debates and discussions within the National Assembly. In pursuance of this objective, the Awami League has been calling for an early meeting of the National Assembly. It had also made itself available for discussions with every political party and leader.

I along with my party leaders met President Yahya and explained the implications of the Six-point constitutional formula, in favour of which the majority of the people of Pakistan, have recorded a historic verdict.

Thereafter, I met the Chairman of the People's Party, Mr Z.A. Bhutto, and my colleagues had several meetings with his colleagues. We impressed upon them that after the historic verdict given by the majority of the people of Pakistan in favour of the Six-point federal scheme, this scheme was now the property of the people. The people had given a mandate to the Awami League to frame a Constitution on the basis of this Six-point formula and the party was irrevocably committed to carry out

this mandate. We expressed our readiness, however, to make necessary clarifications in order to dispel any misgivings they might have about the impact of the Six-point scheme upon any of the legitimate interests of the Punjab, Sind, North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan or on the viability of the Federal Government.

The People's Party itself postponed serious and detailed discussions in respect of the Six-point scheme on the ground that they would first have discussions with their members in West Pakistan, and, thereafter, return for further discussions.

The Awami League, in the meantime re-affirmed that while it was committed to framing a Constitution on the basis of the Six-point scheme, it nonetheless sought cooperation from all parties to give to this country a durable Constitution. In pursuance of this objective, we met Maulana Noorani of Markazi Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, Maulana Gholam Ghaus Hazarvi and Maulana Mufti Mahmood of Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam and other leaders from the Western wing. Simultaneously, we continued to press for the early meeting of the National Assembly, the convening of which in our view was being unduly delayed, since over two months had been allowed to elapse before it was finally summoned.

When utlimately the notice convening the National Assembly on 3rd March 1971 was issued, it appeared for a moment that the forces of reason had prevailed over the dark conspiratorial forces, which always became active in Pakistan whenever the people were about to take over power through the democratic process. These anti-people forces had dismissed an elected Government in East Bengal in 1954, dissolved the Constituent Assembly in 1955, imposed Martial Law in 1958 and intervened to frustrate every peoples' movement thereafter.

That these conspiratorial forces, however, are getting ready to strike once again is seen from the events that have followed since the announcement of the convening of the National Assembly. Mr. Z.A. Bhutto and the People's Party have suddenly started

striking postures and issuing pronouncements which reveal a tendency to subvert the constitutional processes by obstructing the normal functioning of the National Assembly. In this way, transfer of power to the people is sought to be sabotaged.

The Secretary-General of the People's Party is on record with the following statement:

"We have seen that it is not a matter of offended sentiment but a hard economic and political fact that East Pakistan is indeed a colony."* Yet some of the basic objections now being raised to the Six-point Programme, when carefully examined, appear to be nothing but calculated measures to perpetuate the colonial status of Bangladesh. The colonial exploitation of the 70 million people of Bangladesh and the transfer of its resources for the benefit of the vested interests of the other wing have been done principally through the control of foreign trade, foreign aid and foreign exchange by the Centre. Thus over 80 per cent of all foreign aid obtained has been utilised for the benefit of the vested interests of West Pakistan. Over two-thirds of all imports made over the last 23 years has been into West Pakistan. Foreign exchange earnings of Bangladesh to the extent of over Rs 500 crores has been utilised in West Pakistan. Bangladesh has been used as a protected market of 70 million for the benefit of a handful of industrialists of West Pakistan, who have been enabled to make gigantic profits. As a result of such ruthless exploitation, the economy of Bangladesh is in a state of imminent collapse. Haunted by the spectre of famine and denied the bare means of subsistence, the people of Bangladesh have been reduced to a state of total destitution. We can on no account allow this state of affairs to continue. Such exploitation would not have been possible unless foreign trade and aid were with the Centre. in this background, the insistence upon the retention of foreign trade and aid in the Centre appears all too clearly to be designed not to secure the interest of national integrity but

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**Outline of a Federal Constitution for Pakistan*, by J.A. Rahim, page 71.

to ensure the retention in the hands of the Centre of the principal instruments required for the colonial exploitation of Bangladesh.

This view is further confirmed by another proposition propounded by the People's Party. The principle of true federation (whatever that might mean, since no two federations are identical) has been invoked in support of the demand for having a second house, in which it is proposed there should be equality of representation from all units.

In other words, it is proposed that in a second house of say 100, Bangladesh should be represented by only 20. Bangladesh, which has a majority of the population, is thus to be reduced to an insignificant minority. Indeed, the rightist reactionaries of West Pakistan had never earlier dared to propose that the representation of Bangladesh be reduced to 20 per cent, but had contented themselves by calling for parity in representation. If the present proposal for equality of representation in the second house were adopted, then even if Bangladesh were to have representation on population basis in the other house it would still be reduced to a helpless minority. The Centre would thus continue to be controlled by the minority from the other wing. If a centre so constituted were to be vested with the power of foreign trade and aid, it could, happily perpetuate the past pattern of colonial exploitation. The central bureaucrats whose narrow parochial outlook is all too evident in these proposals would thus be able to continue to serve their masters, the vested interests of West Pakistan, whom they have faithfully served for the last 23 years.

The proposal of an effective second house, in which the units are equally represented is, therefore, in the context of Pakistan, not a working model for a true federation but a mischievous continuance designed for perpetuating the colonial exploitation of Bangladesh.

The other objections to the Six-point formula which are being raised, are patent distortions, which are designed to create misunderstanding between the people of Bangladesh and the

oppressed masses of the Western wing. The Six-point scheme does not in any way leave the Federal Government at the mercy of the federating units, as is insinuated. It clearly contemplates adequate appropriations being made by the Federal Government of revenue and foreign exchange resources on the basis of express constitutional provisions, which would empower the Federal Legislature to impose a federal levy on the federating units. This levy would be a first charge on the sources of the units.

Similarly the objection that there would be insuperable difficulty in conducting foreign policy by the Federal Government, if foreign trade and aid are left with the federating units, is not genuine. For it has been time and again re-affirmed that the power in respect of foreign trade and aid would be exercised by the units, "within the framework of the foreign policy of the country".

The attempts to create bitterness between the people of Bangladesh and the oppressed people of the Western wing is being carried to intolerable extremes. It is unfortunate that Bengalees have in effect been dubbed as 'enemies' in whose midst the representatives from West Pakistan would feel themselves 'hostages'. Unwarranted aspersions were cast on Bengalee members of the National Assembly, when the Assembly was termed a 'slaughter-house'. All these extravagant charges were made only because the session of the National Assembly had been called at Dacca. Such a reaction is as unseemly as it is unjustified more specially since Bengalees for all these 23 years have been travelling to West Pakistan where all the major central organs of the state were established. If the atmosphere is poisoned in this way, could not Bengalees legitimately question whether they should be called upon to go to West Pakistan?

Certain further pronouncements shed light on the perspective in which the above position is being taken. Writing in the *Pakistan Times* on the 20th February, 1971 a member of the People's Party has urged as follows:

"....The people must state their correct position on the

question of the integrity of the country and refuse any compromise on fundamental positions. And at least try to protect that part of the country which they can, when it no longer lies in their power to protect the entire country against an impending and overwhelming disaster. The correct political approach is to save what can be saved and not to offer or propose disintegration of the country. We must ask the Awami League to move away from its Six Points and if it does not do so, we must prevent it at all cost from imposing the Six Points upon West Pakistan."

Two points of significance are made. One is the utterly false charge that Awami League is seeking to impose the Six Points upon West Pakistan. The Six Point scheme is in essence a scheme for safeguarding the autonomy of the federating units. If the federating units of West Pakistan do not wish to have precisely the same degree of autonomy as Bangladesh or wish to cede certain additional powers to the Centre or to establish certain regional institution, the Six-Point formula does not at all stand in their way. Nor indeed has the Awami League ever taken up the position that the Six-points would be imposed upon the federating units of West Pakistan. The other point which is strikingly presented is that if Bangladesh cannot be retained on such terms as it was in the past or such terms as are to be dictated by the minority from the other wing, that is, if it cannot be retained as a colony, and instead if Bangladesh were to play its rightful role as the majority province, West Pakistan should be 'saved'. But the question is saved 'from whom' and 'for whom'? Obviously the author would like to see it saved from the Bengalees, who are irrevocably committed to democracy and it is to be saved for the vested interests of West Pakistan, who would not survive in such a democracy and whose right to exploit the down-trodden masses of West Pakistan should be secured, even if they have to lose this 'right' so far as Bangladesh is concerned.

There need be no doubt in the minds of the awakened people of Pakistan that the conspirators and the vested interests

and their lackeys are embarking upon the last desperate bid to frustrate the adoption of a constitution by the elected representatives of the people and the transfer of power to them. Their desperation has reached a point where they are even willing to gamble with the existence of Pakistan while pretending to be concerned with national integrity. It is they who are about to inflict a mortal blow on the integrity of Pakistan by frustrating the last opportunity that the people of Pakistan have of evolving for themselves, through a democratic and constitutional process, a basis for living together. For, this is what a Constitution adopted by the National Assembly of Pakistan would be. We still remain prepared to make every effort in that forum, which is the only proper forum, to discharge our historic responsibility to give to this country a durable Constitution. In this task we invite the cooperation of each and every member of the National Assembly from every part of Pakistan.

Let the oppressed people of Pakistan and the awakened masses, the peasants, workers and students of Bangladesh prepare themselves to resist the conspiracy to sabotage the people's victory. To those who expressed concern over the undesirability of 'dictatorship of the majority' and of 'elective despotism', let us reply that the people of Pakistan will not tolerate 'the dictatorship of the minority' nor can they be intimidated by any despotism, no matter that it may be backed by the bastions of power. The only power we recognise is the power of the people. The people have humbled each and every despot, whose bastions of power could not withstand the determined assaults of an awakened people. Let any would-be despot take lessons from history. We warn the dark forces of conspiracy not to embark on any reckless adventure or to play with the fate of 120 million people. If any one seeks to obstruct or to frustrate the democratic process, it will be the sacred duty of the awakened masses of Bangladesh, the Punjab, Sind, N.W.F.P., and Baluchistan to resist them. I will urge the awakened masses of Bangladesh to prepare to resist the anti-people forces by every

means possible so that they can be rooted out from the soil. We renew our pledge today to lay down our lives, if necessary, so that our future generations do not have to live in a colony, but can live in freedom and with dignity as the free citizens of a free country.

Morning News,
Dacca, February 25, 1971

19

Die But Never Surrender

On February 15, 1971, Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto announced his Party's decision not to attend the National Assembly session beginning in Dacca from March 3. But he added that they were ready to go to Dacca any day if they were assured of any possible change or adjustment in the Six-point Programme. The decision complicated the political situation in Pakistan. Sharp criticism came from the saner section of the Pakistani politicians from both the wings of the country, and they termed this as an absolutely undemocratic move. But two other reactionary parties in West Pakistan, the Muslim League (Qayyum group) and the Council Muslim League, also announced their decision to follow Bhutto's footsteps.

The Sheikh made his comments on this move at a reception arranged in his honour and the newly elected members of the National and East Pakistan Provincial Assemblies on February 28, 1971. The reception which was arranged by the Dacca Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a representative body of the traders and industrialists of the provincial capital, was held on the lawns of the East Pakistan Assembly House in Dacca's Tejgaon area. It was attended, among others, by foreign diplomats, government officials and important personalities of trade and industry. Extracts from the Sheikh's speech are given here in translation.

.....All members of the National Assembly as the elected representatives of the people should attend the session beginning from March 3 and take part in the framing of a Constitution. We must sit and discuss to frame a Constitution. The Chairman of a party in the NA has demanded an assurance from me as a pre-condition to his joining the first session. But who am I to give any assurance? I have no power to give any assurance to anybody. We believe in parliamentary democracy. The decision of the majority will have to be accepted by all.

If an individual member of the Assembly says any reasonable thing we are prepared to accept that. In this connection I would like to reiterate my stand that the Six Points would not be imposed on any one. This programme has not been presented for the people of Bangladesh only. Whatever rights and autonomy we want for Bangladesh, we want the people of Punjab, the NWFP, Sind and Baluchistan also to enjoy. The Six Points are no longer my property—the Programme belongs to the people and, therefore, I have no right to amend it in any form whatsoever.....

Those who have raised the bogey of 'dictatorship of the majority' in fact want to establish the dictatorship of the minority. These remarks are not only objectionable but have also created apprehensions about the future. If 160 members from Bangladesh, like Mr Bhutto's 83, refuse to attend the National Assembly session, I do not know what will happen....

Conspiracies are still going on to try and foil the gains of the election. But I should like to warn the vested interests in clear terms that if any attempt is made to create hindrance in the process of democracy, I shall not be responsible for the consequences. We will die but will never surrender.....

We are determined to establish a socialistic order of economy in the country, not through revolution but through evolution. The economy would be people-oriented so that the ordinary people—the workers, cultivators and the like—get economic iustice. Without a socialist pattern of economy, 70 million

people cannot live in an area of 55,000 square miles.

Pakistan would continue to exist and so would the Bangladesh, the Punjab, Sind, NWFP and Baluchistan. What would cease to exist would be exploitation of man by man. The 23-year post-independence period was an era of exploitation, frustration and gloom for the people of Bangladesh who have turned into utter destitutes. Had the *Quaid-e-Azam,* the Father of the Nation, been alive today, he would surely have said that he did not want such a Pakistan.

People struggled and made tremendous sacrifices to achieve freedom in the hope of having a better life. But instead, they were so much exploited all these years that their very backbone has broken. Who are the persons responsible for this continued exploitation ?.....

The Province is beset with problems all round. Seventy lakh people are now unemployed in Bangladesh and there is an unending flight of the rural populace to the urban areas in search of employment and food. Not even 15 per cent of the people in Central Government services and in the Armed Forces are from Bangladesh. In future, representation of the people of Bangladesh will be made on a population basis. This, however, cannot be achieved overnight but could be within a stipulated period. We are determined to solve the problem of unemployment. We will not allow people to die of starvation.....

Although East Pakistan has earned the bulk of foreign exchange after independence, 80 per cent of the foreign exchange was spent in West Pakistan. It was through deliberate measures that the flourishing handloom industry of Bangladesh had to face extinction, resulting in the unemployment of 20 lakh persons, to ensure a protected market for the finished goods of West Pakistani mills. In the name of protection, the people of Bangladesh have to purchase cloth at a price six times higher than that of the imported cloth from Japan and other countries.

Jute, the backbone of the economy of Bangladesh, lost its export market through a deliberate and defective policy. Tea

is no longer exported from Bangladesh as it finds its way to Middle Eastern countries through the backdoor. Tobacco, another crop of the Province, is facing a crisis. Beeause of the duty imposed on salt manufactures, thousands of people have been rendered jobless to the benefit of salt producers of West Pakistan.....

I once again declare that the banks and insurance companies will be nationalised for the good of the poor people. Twentytwo families have their firm grip and monopoly over banks, they open letters of credit on telephone, whereas the middle class traders are denied any such benefit from the banks. These capitalists used to have their deposits in West Pakistan and drew overdrafts in East Pakistan.

You capitalists came to Bangladesh with meagre capital and turned into millionnaires within a short period of time. May I ask you how have you amassed such fantastic assets? I know the answer. It is all through exploitation as the money has not fallen from heaven. Whenever poor workers raised their demands for pay increase, they were beaten in the name of law and order.....

To take another example of economic and other imbalances between the two wings, there are only 600 beds in hospitals in Bangladesh having 50 per cent of the country's population, whereas there are 26,000 beds in West Pakistan. Who is responsible for such a state of affairs? The Central Government should not have allowed such a disparity to develop.....

I want to remind you, members of the business community, that in the past you have failed to rise to the occasion and did not side with the workers, peasants and students during our struggle for the realization of the legitimate rights of the people of Bangladesh. I do hope that you would not fail if in future the people of Bangladesh plunge themselves into a struggle for establishment of their rights. Otherwise, you will cease to exist.. Or even if you continue to exist. you will live just like slaves....

I would like to point out to the non-Bengalee businessmen

in Bangladesh that it is wrong to think that my party will not allow you to trade in Bangladesh after realisation of the Six Points. You may trade here and we shall never tell you to leave. But please stop the flight of capital.

Joi Bangla is not a political slogan. It is a slogan for autonomy, economic and social freedom of Bangladesh. It is also a slogan for the right of living and freedom of culture.

Dawn,
Karachi, March 1, 1971

20

This Cannot Go Unchallenged

In a noon broadcast to the nation over Radio Pakistan on March 1, 1971, President Yahya Khan announced the postponement of the first session of the National Assembly scheduled for March 3, 1971. In Bangladesh, people who were eagerly listening to the broadcast showed their indignation instantaneously. Hundreds of spontaneous angry processions came out on the Dacca streets, condemning this arbitrary postponement and shouting slogans demanding the liberation of Bengal. People came out of their offices, businessmen closed down their shops, university students left their examination halls, and workers came out of their factories.

The Sheikh was presiding over a constitutional committee meeting of the Awami League at Hotel Purbani the same afternoon. Thousands of people gathered outside the hotel in Dacca's busy commercial area to listen to the directive of their leader in the face of the changed situation. Apprehending acts of violence, Mujib tried to pacify the angry masses. He announced his immediate programme of action before the waiting journalists who had gathered there to know his reaction. Some extracts in translation from his announcement are presented here.

It is unfortunate that the session has been postoponed when all the National Assembly members from the East wing and all

West Pakistani members except those belonging to the People's Party and the Muslim League (Qayyum faction) had already reached Dacca to attend it and help in framing a new Constitution in preparation for the restoration of civilian rule.

The postponement of the session is nothing but a conspiracy. Only for the sake of a minority party's disagreement the democratic process of constitution-making has been obstructed and the National Assembly session has been postponed *sine die*.

This is most unfortunate as far as we are concerned. We are the representatives of the majority people and we cannot allow this to go unchallenged....

I call for a complete strike in Dacca tomorrow and a province-wide strike day after tomorrow, the date fixed earlier for the National Assembly to meet. I shall have consultations with other Bangaladesh leaders—Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Professor Muzaffar Ahmad, Mr. Nurul Amin and Mr. Ataur Rahman Khan. After that I shall announce my next course of action at a public meeting on March 7 at the Race Course. You will see history made if the conspirators fail to come to their senses.

We are ready for any consequence. I have mentioned many times the fact that a conspiracy is going on in this country. There was a general election and the people have elected us to serve them and we have a responsibility towards them. But in spite of the clear verdict in our favour, the conspiracy has struck at its root....

The majority of the elected representatives of the people are from Bangladesh and, in collaboration with the elected representatives from West Pakistan with the exception of Bhutto's and Qayyum's parties, we were quite capable of framing the Constitution. We cannot betray our people and we cannot betray the trust the people have placed in us. We shall continue our struggle until we achieve our goal. You know that there is Martial Law in the country. But the Chairman of

the Pakistan People's Party has threatened the Members of the National Assembly from West Pakistan who were willing to come to East Pakistan to attend the session that they would be liquidated if they come to East Pakistan to attend the National Assembly session. Mr. Bhutto has taken the law into his own hands. Is the law and order situation only meant for the poor Bangalees?.....

We want cooperation and we have told them repeatedly that they should come to the National Assembly where we will be able to discuss the framing of the Constitution for five days at a time and hold discussion for another five days. Democracy demands that the voice of the majority should be accepted. But in our case, the minority party has always had the upper hand. I suggested that 15th February be set for the opening of the National Assembly, but the Assembly was called for in the first week of March in accordance with the wishes of the minority party....

I also urge the people of the West wing provinces of Punjab, Sind, North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan to rise in protest against this conspiracy of the vested interests. The non-Bangalees living in Bengal are sons of the soil; they should consider this soil as their own and join with the people here..

The People,
Dacca, March 2, 1971

21

Bengalees Cannot be Suppressed Any More

On March 1, 1971 the Police used tear-gas to disrupt the spontaneous processions in Dacca protesting against the postponement of the National Assembly session. Armed guards were deployed in the Radio and TV centres. The Governor of East Pakistan, S.M. Ahsan, was dismissed and the Martial Law Administrator was asked to take charge of the provincial administration. On the following day Dacca and some other towns in Bangladesh observed complete hartal in response to a call given by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Army faced opposition from the crowd when they tried to enter the Dacca Airport to take it absolutely under their control. People were so agitated that they decided on their own to block the Airport road. The Army opened fire on the crowd to make their way and several unarmed people were killed or injured.

Mujib condemned the firing in a statement issued on the evening of March 2, 1971. Here is the full text of the statement.

Unarmed boys have been fired upon today. At least two have died, and several more seriously injured. They have been shot at because they, along with the rest of the people of Bangladesh, had stood up to protest against the gross insult inflicted upon Bangladesh by the powers that be. I strongly condemn

such firing and urge the elements who are seeking to confront the people with force to desist forthwith from this reckless course. They should be reminded that firing upon unarmed masses amounts to genocide and is a crime against humanity. They should know that if Bangladesh is afire, as it will be if such confrontation continues, then they will not be able to escape the flames. We, as the elected representatives of the seventy million people of Bangladesh were ready to sit with the representatives from the western wing on the 3rd March for the purpose of constitution-making. Indeed, some of the representatives from the western wing had already come to Dacca. But then a sudden and unwarranted intervention prevented this sitting from taking place.

The intervention was prompted by an intransigent minority group, which, as the protector of the vested interests of the western wing and their bureaucratic lackeys, had declared that the sitting should not be held except on terms dictated by them. They had even gone to the length of openly threatening to deal with other West wing representatives who dared to defy such dictation. Such denial of the rights of the representatives of the majority of the people at the behest of an undemocratic minority is an intolerable insult to the people.

Since the people of Bangladesh would not submit to such dictation or intimidation they are now sought to be confronted by force. It is tragic that planes which might have carried elected representatives from the western wing, should instead be engaged in lifting military personnel and arms. If these measures are intended to cow down seventy million Bangalees, the spontaneous demonstration of the will to resist displayed throughout Bangladesh since yesterday should prove to the world that Bengalees cannot be suppressed any more and that they are determined to be free citizens of a free country. They will no longer tolerate being exploited as a colony or a market.

At this critical hour it is the sacred duty of each and every Bengalee in every walk of life, including government officials,

not to cooperate with anti-people forces and indeed to do everything in their power to foil the conspiracy against Bangladesh.

Now that representatives have been elected by the people and are the only legitimate source of authority, all previous authorities are, therefore, expected to take note of this fact.

In the circumstances, there is no justification for the continuation of Martial Law or military rule by a single day. I, therefore, urge the immediate withdrawal of Martial Law, an immediate end to the 'confrontation', and removal of obstacles to the exercise by the people's representatives of the power that is rightfully theirs. Our movement will continue till the above demands are met and till the people of Bangladesh realise their emancipation.

I am announcing our programme of action till 7th March and issuing the following directives to our people:

(a) Province-wide Hartal to be observed on each day from 3rd March, 1971 to 6th March, 1971 from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. in all spheres including government offices, secretariat, High Court and other courts, semi-government and autonomous corporations, P.I.A., Railways and other communication services, transport, private and public, all mills, factories, industrial and commercial establishments and markets. Exemptions are to be extended to ambulances, press cars, hospitals, medicine shops, electricity and water supply. All persons are urged to observe the Hartal in a peaceful and disciplined manner and to ensure that no untoward incident such as looting, burning etc., takes place. In particular people should be alert against agent-provocateurs and should remember that everyone living in Bangladesh no matter where he originates from or the language he speaks is for us a Bengalee and their person, property and honour are our sacred trust and these must be protected.

(b) March 3, which was to have been the day for the sitting of the National Assembly should be observed as a day of national mourning, on which occasion I will lead a procession from Paltan Maidan at 4 p.m. immediately after the conclusion

of the meeting being held by Students' League.

(c) In the event of radio, television or newspapers failing to cover our version of events or our statements, all Bengalees serving in these agencies, should refuse to cooperate with such gagging of the voice of the seventy million people of Bangladesh.

(d) On 7th March, 1971 at 2 p.m. I shall address a mass rally of our people at the Race Course Maidan, when further directives will be issued.

(e) I would urge our people to continue with our common struggle in a peaceful and disciplined manner. I would remind them that any breach of discipline would be against the interest of our movement and will serve the interest of agent-provocateurs and the anti-peopie forces.

The People,
Dacca, March 3, 1971

22

Withdraw Forces and Transfer Power

An eleven hour curfew was clamped on Dacca on March 2, 1971. But people defied the curfew at a number of places and came out on the streets chanting slogans demanding the absolute independence of Bangladesh. The Army opened fire on the people defying the curfew and, as a result, a number of people were killed or injured seriously. A new Martial Law Ordinance was issued putting curbs on the publication of news and photographs in the press.

March 3, 1971 witnessed a complete hartal throughout Bangladesh in response to the call given by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 1. The Students' League, the students' front of the Awami League, organised a massive meeting at the Paltan Maidan to demonstrate their support for the move taken by the Awami League, although the students had also been urging the Awami League leadership to launch a movement for Sovereign Bangladesh. The Sheikh came to address the Students' League meeting on March 3 and called upon the people to continue their struggle in a peaceful and organised manner. Extracts in translation from this speech are given here.

....By obstructing the constitutional method the authorities have virtually compelled the people to shed their innocent

blood for realising their legal rights. I appeal to the authorities concerned to immediately stop this wrong course by withdrawing Martial Law and transferring power to the elected representatives....

The forces are being maintained for protecting the country, and they should not be used against the common masses. I urge the authorities to pull back the forces to their barracks without further delay.

I have no language to condemn the incidents that took place in the city last night. I do not know how many people died yesterday. I myself heard machine-guns being fired at innocent people....

I want to make it clear that the present situation in the country is not the creation of any section of the people of Bangladesh, but of the conspirators who had been trying to sabotage the peaceful transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people. The majority party has even been ignored while important national decisions were taken. We as the majority party in the country were in favour of the National Assembly session on February 15, but Mr Bhutto wanted it to be deferred to the first week of March, and when it was summoned to meet today he opposed it again. I regret very much the stand taken by the People's Party Chief regarding this session of the National Assembly. Although we were ready to attend the session, the use of arms has been directed against us. The PPP Chief threatened to set West Pakistan afire if the session was not postponed. But the Martial Law authorities did not even think of taking any action against him. I should like to say one thing very clearly to the West Pakistani leaders. If you do not want to frame one constitution, let us frame our own constitution and you frame your own. Then let us see if we can live together as brothers....

I call upon everyone in Bangladesh to join in a non-violent non-cooperation movement for the realisation of the rights of the people of Bangladesh. I appeal to you all to maintain peace

for the success of the movement. You should keep yourself alert against agent-provocateurs and maintain complete discipline, otherwise the purpose of the movement would be defeated. I call upon you from all walks of life to rise to the occasion and protect the life and property of everyone living in this part of the country, whether Hindu or Muslim, Bengalee or non-Bengalee. Maintain communal peace at all costs and you should not forget that the 'Biharis' and non-Muslims are our sacred trust. The maintenance of discipline is the pre-requisite for the success of any mass movement. Without discipline, no movement can achieve any tangible results, no matter how many lives we sacrifice. I particularly remind our volunteers of their responsibilities in this connection....

This speech at Paltan Maidan today might be my last speech before you. Continue your struggle in full swing even if I am absent. There is a chain of leaders among my colleagues and they will be able to guide you correctly in your struggle.

I can never forget that the people of Bangladesh freed me from jail at the cost of their lives and shed their blood in the past. We are ready to make further sacrifices and give more blood. You cannot suppress the Bengalees by killing seventy million people. If I die before the realisation of our goal, my soul would be there to rejoice to know that the Bengalees are free and that they have two square meals a day....

I have no grudge against the poor people of West Pakistan. We have been trying to live together for the last 23 years but West Pakistan now wants to secede because they know it well by now that they cannot perpetuate their exploitation....

I call upon the Press not to obey any restriction on you, if any. If you are unable to resist restrictions, you should refuse to attend your offices. It is a national struggle and everyone's participation is essential....

You should observe hartal throughout Bangladesh everyday till March 6, from 6 a.m. to 2. p.m. After the hartal the vehicles should be allowed to move. I urge you to pay a bit more to the

rickshaw pullers to cover their day's earnings....

I will seek help and cooperation from all shades of opinion for the success of the Movement....

Remember I will never betray the cause of the people of Bangladesh even if I have to face death.....

Dawn,
Karachi, March 4, 1971

23

Invitation to Conference : A Cruel Joke

On March 3, 1971, President General Yahya Khan announced that a meeting of the leaders of all parliamentary groups in the National Assembly would be convened on March 10 in Dacca to solve the constitutional tangle. Before the formal invitation reached the Awami League Chief, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Dacca, he rejected the invitation in a strongly worded statement. The next day Mr Nurul Amin, the Pakistan Democratic Party Chief, also refused to attend the proposed meeting. He was later followed by the leaders of Jamat-e-Islami, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam (Hazarvi Group) and Muslim League (Convention) from West Pakistan. Ultimately the meeting had to be cancelled.

The statement issued by Mujib on March 3, 1971 rejecting the invitation appears here in full.

The Radio announcement of the proposed invitation to the political leaders to sit with the President of Pakistan in conference in Dacca on March 10, coming as it does in the wake of widespread killing of the unarmed civilian population in Dacca, Chittagong and other places in Bangladesh, while the blood of the martyrs on the streets is hardly dry, while some of the dead are still lying unburied and hundreds are fighting death in hos-

pitals, comes as a cruel joke. This is more so since we are being called upon to sit with certain elements whose devious machinations are responsible for the death of innocent and unarmed peasants, workers and students.

With the military build up eontinuing, with harsh language of weapons still ringing in our ears, the invitation to such a conference is in effect being made at gun-point.

Under these circumstances, the question of accepting such an invitation does not arise. I, therefore, reject this invitation.

Dawn,
Karachi, March 4, 1971

24

I Congratulate Our Heroic Masses

Curfew was clamped on Dacca and some other towns in Bangladesh again in the night of March 3-4, 1971. As before, the masses violated the curfew and faced the bullets of the Army. Heavy casualties were reported from different parts of the province. Complete hartal was observed throughout Bangladesh for the second consecutive day, and in Dacca and some other towns for the third. In a statement issued on March 4, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman congratulated the masses of Bangladesh for their unanimous response to his call and asked the Government and non-Government offices, where employees had not been paid their salaries for the month of February, to function for two hours during the next two days of hartal for the purpose of disbursing salaries.

That the Sheikh was virtually governing Bangladesh during these days of non-cooperation movement, could well be understood from the fact that all the banks including the State Bank of Pakistan functioned for two hours a day on March 5 and 6 as per his directive.

The full text of the statement of March 4 issued in Dacca to this effect appears here.

I congratulate our heroic masses for the stirring response made by every man, woman and child of Bangladesh to our call to

protest against the conspiracy to perpetuate exploitation and colonial rule. The people of the world should know of the courage and determination with which the unarmed civilians of Bangladesh—workers, peasants and students—have demonstrated against the denial of their rights even in the face of bullets.

I also congratulate our resolute people for having withstood the hardships and sacrifices which the continuing hartal imposes on them. They must, however, remember that no people have attained freedom without extreme sacrifice. The people, therefore, must remain prepared to continue their struggle for emancipation at any cost.

While the hartal is to continue on the 5th and 6th March from 6 a.m. to 2. p.m., it is necessary to extend the following exemptions:

1. Government and non-Government offices where the employees have not as yet been paid their salaries, should function between 2·30 p.m. and 4·30 p.m. for the purpose only of disbursing salaries.

Banks should function within these hours (2·30 p.m. to 4·30 p.m.) for the purpose of cash transactions within Bangladesh only in respect of salary cheques not exceeding Rs. 1,500. No remittances should be effected outside Bangladesh through the State Bank or otherwise. The State Bank should take necessary action in this connection.

Ration Shops and food supplies should utilise this opportunity for their transactions.

2. The following essential services are exempted: (a) Hospitals and medicine shops, (b) Ambulance cars, (c) Doctors' cars, (d) Press cars, (e) Water supply, (f) Gas supply, (g) Electric supply, (h) Local telephones and trunk telephones with other districts of Bangladesh, (i) Fire service and (j) Sweepers and scavenger trucks.

Dawn,
Karachi, March 5, 1971

25

Our Struggle This Time is a Struggle for Independence

On March 5, 1971 Mujib disclosed that at least 300 people had been killed and another 2000 injured in and around Dacca alone as a result of the firing by the Army. In some places the Pakistani flag and the portrait of Mohammad Ali Jinnah were burnt by the angry mobs. A new flag of Bangladesh, having a red sun on green background and the map of Bangladesh inscribed in yellow, was hoisted in a gathering. The military authorities said in a press statement on the same day that the situation in Bangladesh had improved to a great extent following the call for peace by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

On March 6, the President announced in a broadcast that the National Assembly would now meet on March 25, 1971. But he also reaffirmed that the Armed Forces would maintain the integrity of Pakistan at any cost. Bhutto did not waste any time in announcing that his Party would attend the session. On the same day the appointment of Lieutenant-General Tikka Khan, infamous as the 'Butcher of Baluchistan', as the new Governor of East Pakistan was announced. The Working Committee of the Awami League went into a session on March 6 and continued discussions throughout the whole night.

March 7 witnessed the historic public meeting at the Dacca Race Course where at least one million eager Bengalees came to receive orders from their leader. Most of the people present had come to hear a declaration of independence by their leader. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman arrived at the meeting place unus-

ually late. In his 18-minute speech, he expressed his determination to continue the Movement till the emancipation of the Bengalees was achieved. But the people were anxious for a more speedy and direct action and consequently there was some disappointment.

Extracts from this speech, which is probably the most significant one in his political life, appear here in translation.

Today I come to you with a heavy heart. You know everything and understand as well. We tried our best. But the streets of Dacca, Chittagong, Khulna, Rangpur and Jessore have been dyed red with the blood of our brethren.

People of Bangladesh today want liberation, they want to survive, they want to have their rights. What wrong did we do? In the elections you voted for Awami League to win and frame the Constitution. We had a hope that we would sit in the Assembly and frame a Constitution which would lead to the emancipation of the people economically, politically and culturally.

But the history of the last 23 years is the history of the dying cries of the people of Bangladesh, the history of pathetic blood-shed and the history of misery of oppressed people. We shed blood in 1952. We could not establish ourselves in power in 1954 even after winning the elections. In 1958 Ayub Khan promulgated the Martial Law in the country and made us slaves for 10 years. In 1966 the Six-point Programme was launched and only for that many of my brothers were killed. Ayub had to step down in the face of a mass upsurge in 1969 and then came Yahya Khan. He said he would return power to the people and let the country have a constitution. We believed in his words.

What happened after that, all of you know. The elections were held. I had talks with President Yahya Khan and requested him to convene the National Assembly on February 15. But in spite of my being the leader of the majority party, he did

not listen to my proposal. He listened to the words of the leader of a minority party, Mr Bhutto. I happen to be the leader of the majority party not only in Bangladesh but in the whole of Pakistan as well. Mr Bhutto proposed to convene the session in the first week of March and the President convened it on March 3. I said all right. We will sit in the Assembly and though we are in the majority, we will accept any just proposal even if it comes from a lone member.

Mr. Bhutto came to Dacca. I had talks with him. He said the doors of discussion were not closed, there would be further talks. Also came other West Pakistani leaders of various parties in the Parliament including Maulana Noorani and Mufti Mahmud. We had talks with them also. Our aim was to frame a Constitution after having discussions. But I told them clearly that I had no authority of changing the Six Points which had become the property of the people.

But Mr. Bhutto gave a threat. He said that they could not be 'double hostages' coming here. The Assembly would turn into a 'slaughter house'. He threatened to liquidate any one who tried to join the Assembly from West Pakistan. He would launch a movement from Peshawar to Karachi. Not even a shop would be allowed to open.

In spite of all these threats, 35 members came from West Pakistan. I said, the Assembly would sit. But Yahya Khan postponed the session on March 1. The blame was put on the people of Bangladesh and on me. He alleged that no progress could be made because of my uncompromising attitude.

The people of Bangladesh raised their voice in protest against this move. I urged the people to observe peaceful hartal. I asked them to close down all factories and mills. The people responded. They came out on the streets on their own and resolved to continue the Movement. But what did we get in return? Arms were used against the unarmed people of Bangladesh. We have no arms with us. The arms which were bought by our money to safeguard the country from foreign

aggression are now being used to kill our poor people. My distressed people are being shot at.

Invariably there has been a conspiracy whenever we, the majority people in Bangladesh, wanted to take over power and become the masters of our own destiny. They pounced on us every time.

Yahya Khan has said that I wanted to attend the Round Table Conference of March 10. In fact I spoke to him over the telephone. I told him: You are the President of the country. Please come to Dacca and see for yourself how my poor people have been killed, how the laps of my mothers have been emptied.

I had categorically said that there would be no RTC or any thing of that sort. What RTC? How can I sit across the same table with those who have emptied the laps of my mothers and sisters?

I gave a call for non-cooperation on March 3 at Paltan Maidan. I urged you to stop going to offices and paying taxes. You responded to my call.

In his speech which was made without consulting me or my men, but after having a long talk for five hours with one particular person, Yahya Khan has put all the blame on me and the people of Bengal. My people of Bangladesh have been killed for the offence committed by Mr Bhutto. We are the victims of guns and the fault is ours; we are the victims of bullets and the fault is ours!

The struggle this time is the struggle for freedom; the struggle this time is the struggle for Independence. The President has convened the Assembly on 25th March. But the blood-stains have not yet dried up. I want to make it clear that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman cannot go to the Assembly stepping over the blood shed by the martyrs.

Before we go to the Assembly, our demands have to be conceded. The first demand: the martial law has to be with-drawn. Second, the army has to be returned to the barracks. Third, power has to be transferred to the elected representatives

of the people. And fourth, official enquiries have to be made about the recent killings. After that we will consider whether we can sit in the Assembly or not. The question of attending the Assembly does not arise at all before these demands are met. Our people have not authorised us to do so.

My brothers, do you have faith in me? I do not want to be Prime Minister. I want the rights of the people. They could not buy me by offering the primeministership. They could not buy me on point of death by hanging. You freed me from the conspiracy case by shedding your blood. I promised that day on this very Race Course that I would repay the loan of blood by blood. Do you remember that? This day too, I am as ready as before.

I would like to declare that from today all lower courts, High Court, Supreme Court, offices and educational institutions will remain closed for an indefinite period of time. No employee should go to his office. This is my directive....

All the government, semi-government and autonomous offices including the Secretariat, Judges' Courts etc. will remain closed. The banks will remain open for two hours a day only for transactions within Bangladesh. Not a single paisa would be allowed to go to West Pakistan from here. Telegraph and telephone will function only within Bangladesh. But newsmen must be allowed to send their despatches to the outside world.

You should go to draw your salaries on the appointed day. If the salaries are not paid and if another single bullet is fired and my people are killed, I would urge you to make every home a fortress. You will have to face the enemy with whatever you have. You should block all their roads. If I am not there or my associates are not there to direct you, you should continue the Movement....

Even now I say to the soldiers that you are our brothers. Stay inside your barracks and nobody is going to say a word to you. But if you open fire again, things will go wrong. You cannot silence seventyfive million people any more. Remember,

we have already shed our blood, we will not hesitate to shed more. *Insha Allah*—we shall free the people of this country....

Awami League has formed a Relief Committee for helping the families of the martyrs and injured persons. We shall try to help them. Please contribute to this fund as much as you can.

I request the mill owners to pay full salaries to the workers who participated in the week-long hartal.

I ask the Government employees to obey what I say. Make sure that nobody is seen in the offices. Realisation of taxes will remain suspended until this land is liberated. I know how to keep a movement going. You leave that to me.

But be careful of one thing. The enemy has entered our own ranks. They are trying to create differences among ourselves and organise looting and other such activities. The seventyfive million people—Hindu, Muslim or Bengalee, non-Bengalee—all are our brothers. It is our duty to protect them.

Railways should function. But the movement of troops must not be allowed. If they try to move, I should not be held responsible for the consequences....

If there is an amicable settlement of the problem, there is still a chance of our living together as brothers....

I request you to form Action Committees in every village, ward and union under the leadership of the Awami League. Prepare yourself with whatever you have.

Be on the alert. You cannot afford to sink now. Continue your agitation. If we are even slightly careless in our movement, they will pounce on us. Maintain discipline. No nation can win a struggle without discipline. *Joi Bangla.*

This speech was recorded at the meeting and later broadcast from Dacca Radio on March 8, 1971.

26

We are the only Legitimate Source of Authority

The Working Committee of the Awami League met within closed doors on March 6 and 7, 1971 at Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Dacca residence. With breaks for only lunch and dinner, it was a marathon session and continued till the Sheikh's departure for the Race Course to address the hundreds of thousands of anxiously waiting people. The Awami League leaders had to decide whether or not a declaration of Independence of Bangladesh as pressed by the people as well as their student front should be made. At the last minute, the compromise was evolved that Mujib would announce four demands in the meeting.

Extracts from this speech have been given earlier. No doubt, Mujib succeeded in pacifying the angry masses at the Race Course that day by his inimitable oratory, but it was obvious that the people were disappointed to some extent at his not calling for more positive action. Later in the evening, he issued a press statement clarifying the whole situation and reiterating the demands made at the meeting.

The full text of the press statement of March 7, 1971 is reproduced here.

Between the 1st of March (when there was a sudden announcement of the postponement *sine die* of the sitting of the

National Assembly) and the 6th of March, the people of Bangladesh have been subjected to military confrontation. There has been widespread firing upon unarmed civilians (workers, peasants and students) who had stood up to protest against the sudden and unwarranted postponement of the National Assembly. Those who have lost their lives during the first week are martyrs who died protecting the democratic rights of the people against the arbitrary and unwarranted action of postponement, *sine die* of the National Assembly.

It is said that the postponement of the National Assembly has been 'misunderstood'. I should like to ask the President whether or not this postponement was effected solely in response to the machinations of a single party—constituting a minority of the local members—against the declared wishes of the majority party and also those of numerous members from the West wing.

We had suggested the 15th of February as the date of the first sitting, while the minority group in question had indicated a preference for the first week of March. It was the minority group's view which was accepted and the Assembly was summoned on the 3rd of March. But then the same minority group raised objections to participation in the National Assembly. First, it took up the highly objectionable position that its members would be in 'jeopardy' if they came to Dacca and they would be 'double hostages'. Thereafter this party took up the position that it would only attend the National Assembly on the terms dictated by it. It then went on to strike another posture when its members recorded a decision to resign from the National Assembly. What was particularly surprising was that almost simultaneously an amendment appeared in the Legal Framework Order enabling Members to resign before the first sitting. But then they decided not to resign. This party's intransigence reached its climax when on 27th February it declared that it would launch a mass movement if the National Assembly was to meet without its participation. It went so

far as to say that the people would take full 'revenge on those who chose to attend the National Assembly session and that if the people failed to take revenge', then the party 'would take action against them'. It further threatened that if any member of its own attended the session the workers would liquidate him.

But this time our Parliamentary Party had assembled at Dacca and members had already begun to arrive from the different provinces of the western wing.

The Chief Election Commissioner had reached Dacca and announced that the election of the women members was to be held on the 2nd of March. The President himself was expected to arrive on the 1st of March for the inaugural session.

Our own position on constitution-making had been clearly stated in our press statement of 24th February when we reiterated our invitation to each and every member of the National Assembly from all parts of Pakistan to cooperate with us in this historic task. On 27th February I went to the extent of affirming that if any member presents before the Assembly anything just and reasonable we would accept it. But even this was ignored, it would appear deliberately and with motive.

On 1st March, by a radio statement there was sudden and unwarranted postponement of the National Assembly *sine die*. The reason given was that there should be more time for 'understanding' and it was said that there was political confrontation between the leaders of East Pakistan and those of the West. Did the people of Bangladesh not have sufficient reason to feel that their democratic rights had been grossly interfered with at the behest of an undemocratic minority? Were there not enough grounds for them to feel that a minority group had aligned itself with certain forces to obstruct the constitutional process and to deprive the majority of the people of their rights? Indeed, these apprehensions were further fortified by the steady military build-up which became evident. This showed that the political confrontation was soon to be followed by 'military

confrontation', if the majority did not submit to the dictation of the minority.

Indeed, we had warned in our statement of 24th February that the dark conspiratorial forces had always intervened in our country whenever the people were to take over power through the democratic process. The microscopic minority which represented the vested interests of the western wing, had by sabotaging democracy deprived the 75 million people of Bangladesh, as they did the oppressed masses of the western wing, of their basic rights. In 1953 the Bengali Prime Minister was dismissed by a conspiracy of the Punjabi ruling clique. In 1954 the elected government in East Bengal was dismissed and the Constituent Assembly itself was dismissed by the same clique. When general elections were to be held in early 1959, the vested interests of the Punjab once again struck and usurped power. Today the Punjabi ruling coterie is attempting to repeat this disgraceful history. But they should know that the awakened masses of Bangladesh as also the oppressed masses of the western wing shall resist their foul conspiracies by every means possible.

To set the record right, I should make it clear that I had never conveyed any impression that an RTC type of conference should be held. I had only conveyed to the President that he should come to Dacca in order to see the grave situation prevailing in Bangladesh. As for the earlier meeting proposed by the President, we had made it clear that our pre-occupation with our Working Committee and Parliamentary Party meetings which had been fixed several weeks in advance would not enable us to travel to Rawalpindi at that time. Furthermore, we had pointed out that constitutional issues were best resolved within the National Assembly and its Committees rather than by secret negotiations, and that once a National Assembly had been brought into being, there was no justification for any RTC or secret parleys.

I have recounted all these facts in detail to repudiate the charge that the Awami League has in any way obstructed the trans-

fer of power. The majority party is certainly not the party which would stand to gain by such obstruction. It is only too clear to the people of the country and indeed the world that it is a minority group of the western wing which has obstructed and is continuing to obstruct the transfer of power.

The democratic way of life cannot be established nor can power be transferred to the people if a minority group conspired with the vested interests to frustrate the democratic process. If the democratic way of life be the ultimate casualty and if the proposed transfer of power is aborted, this minority group and those who colluded with it shall not escape responsibility. Are these very elements not the handful of people whose actions have struck grievous blows to the efforts of the elected representatives of the people to evolve a basis for living together?

Today after the elections the only legitimate source of authority in the country are the elected representatives of the people. No individual can claim authority superior to that of the elected representatives. We as the representatives of the overwhelming majority of the people of Bangladesh assert that we are the only legitimate source of authority for Bangladesh. Indeed by virtue of our majority position, we are the legitimate source of authority for the whole country.

The events of the last seven days have shown that all branches of Government functioning throughout Bangladesh have accepted us as the source of legitimate authority and have carried out our directives.

Today the President and the Government of Islamabad should acknowledge this basic fact. It would therefore be in consonance with the declared wishes of the people of Bangladesh that none should interfere with the exercise of authority by the elected representatives of the people.

This brings us to the question of the sitting of the National Assembly announced for the 25th March. We had ourselves time and again asserted the urgency in respect of an early sitting,

but today a grave and abnormal situation has been created. A virtual reign of terror has been created in pursuance of the policy of military confrontation of the civilian population of Bangladesh. The members of the National Assembly could not be expected to discharge their duties in an atmosphere of terror.

So long as this state of confrontation as also the inflow of army personnel and arms from the western wing continues, so long as an atmosphere of repression is maintained, so long as there are daily reports of military firing upon civilians in different parts of Bangladesh, the Members from Bangladesh could hardly be expected to contemplate participating in the National Assembly at gun point.

If the President sincerely desired that the National Assembly, as the soverign body of the elected representatives of the people, should function then the following measures must immediately be adopted:

(a) Immediate withdrawal of military personnel to their barracks;
(b) Immediate cessation of firing upon civilians;
(c) Immediate cessation of the military build-up and heavy inflow of military personnel from the western wing;
(d) Non-interference by the military authorities in the different branches of the Government functioning in Bangladesh and direction to desist from victimisation of Government officers and employees;
(e) Maintenance of law and order to be left exclusively to the Police and Bengalee EPR assisted, wherever necessary, by Awami League volunteers;
(f) Immediate withdrawal of Martial Law ; and
(g) Immediate transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people.

If the military confrontation is continued, let there be no doubt that no National Assembly can ever function.

Our people have already proclaimed to the world that they shall no longer allow themselves to be exploited as a colony or a

market. They have expressed their determination to be the free citizens of a free country. Our economy must be saved from ruination. Our toiling masses are to be saved from starvation, disease and unemployment. The millions in the cyclone-ravaged areas are yet to be rehabilitated.

If the ruling coteries seek to frustrate these aspirations, the people are ready for a long and sustained struggle for their emancipation. We pledge to lead this struggle and ultimately to attain for the people their cherished goal of emancipation for which so many martyrs have shed their blood and made the supreme sacrifice of their lives. The blood of these martyrs shall not go in vain.

The first phase of our struggle has been launched. Our heroic masses have displayed indomitable courage and determination. They have braved bullets and violated curfews in a planned manner. I also congratulate our people and our Awami League volunteers, who have frustrated the designs of agent provocateurs and anti-social elements to create communal tension between different religious groups and between Bengalees and so-called 'non-Bengalees'.

I once again reaffirm that every person living in Bangladesh is a Bengalee and that his person, property and honour are our sacred trust and must at any cost be protected. We are proud to note that since our volunteers have undertaken the task of vigilance and patrol, there have been no untoward incidents.

Our struggle must continue. The objective of the present phase of the struggle is the immediate termination of the Martial Law and the transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people. Till this objective is attained, our non-violent, non-cooperation movement must continue.

Dawn,
Karachi, March 8, 1971

27

I Take Over the Administration

A non-violent non-cooperation movement began throughout Bangladesh from March 8, 1971 following Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's call in the Race Course meeting on March 7. Black flags were hoisted atop private houses, educational institutions, business establishments and government offices. All variety of transport vehicles also flew miniature black flags. Other directives were followed in toto. The effectiveness of the movement could well be imagined from the fact that the Chief Justice as all the Judges of the East Pakistan High Court declined to administer the oath of office to Lt. General Tikka Khan for him to take over as the Governor of the Province. So the President had no other alternative than to appoint him the Martial Law Administrator of East Pakistan on March 10.

Meanwhile the families of the non-Bengalee Army officers were being evacuated to West Pakistan by chartered planes. The foreign nationals were also being evacuated by their respective governments. On March 11, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman sent an appeal to the UNO Secretary General, U Thant, to look into the question of basic human rights of the seventyfive million people of Bangladesh. He also alleged that the military personnel and equipment in Bangladesh were being reinforced from West Pakistan.

Air Marshal Asgar Khan, a former Chief of the Pakistan Air Force and President of the Tehriq-i-Istiqlal, a new political party,

said in a press conference in Karachi on his return from a tour of Bangladesh that Bengalees might declare independence if the power was not transferred to the elected representatives of the people.

On March 15, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took over the administration of Bangladesh by issuing some 35 directives. While the Sheikh's directives were handed over to the press, President Yahya Khan was on his way to Dacca from Karachi. On arrival at Dacca, he drove to the President's House from the Airport in the midst of tight security measures.

On March 14, just a day before the President's arrival at Dacca for having talks with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Tikka Khan issued a Martial Law Order asking the government servants who were paid out of the defence budget to report for duty within 24 hours, failing which the employees could be dismissed and tried by special military tribunals. But the order was ignored by the Bengalee employees.

The statement, issued on March 15 by Mujib in connection with the taking over of the administration is reproduced here.

The heroic struggle of the people marches forward. All those who cherish freedom and are struggling for it the world over, should regard our cause as their own. Our people have proved how a determined and united people can be a bulwark of freedom against those who conspire to rule by force.

The people of Bangladesh, civil servants, office and factory workers, peasants and students, have demonstrated in no uncertain terms that they would die rather than surrender. It is deplorable that even at this stage some unthinking people are trying to intimidate a section of civilian employees by promulgating Martial Law orders.

Today the entire people are united in their determination not to submit to the Martial Law. I, therefore, urge those at whom the latest order has been directed not to yield to the threat that has been levelled against them. Seventyfive million people of Bangladesh are behind them and their families.

The spirit of freedom in Bangladesh cannot be extinguished.

We cannot be conquered because each of us is determined to die if need be to ensure that our future generations can live in freedom and with dignity as free citizens of a free country.

The struggle shall, therefore, continue with renewed vigour until our goal of emancipation is realised. I appeal to the people to remain ready for any sacrifice and, should force be unleashed against them, to resist it by all means possible.

I am taking over the administration to deal with the affairs of the seventyfive million population in Bangladesh on the basis of my party's absolute majority in the Provincial Assembly and its dominant position in the National Assembly. This is aimed at emancipation of the people of Bangladesh.

Directives

1. Secretariats of Central and Provincial Government and semi-Government offices, autonomous bodies, High Courts and all other courts throughout Bangladesh shall observe hartal, subject to specific directives set out below and such exemptions and clarifications as may be issued from time to time.
2. All educational institutions throughout Bangladesh shall remain closed.
3. The Deputy Commissioners and the Sub-Divisional Officers should handle what work they could to maintain law and order without reopening their offices.
4. Police, if necessary, should be assisted by the Awami League Volunteers.
5. The Warders and Officers in the jails should remain active. The Ansars should carry on their duties.
6. The port authorities should function in all respects relating to incoming and outgoing ships except that no cooperation shall be extended for mobilization of forces or materials which may be utilised for repression against the people.

7. The incoming ships should be off-loaded without any delay. The relative branch of the Excise Department should function and permit to off-load the goods. The excise duty collected from that should be deposited with the Eastern Banking Corporation or the Eastern Mercantile Bank Ltd. by opening a special account. This account shall be operated by the Collector of Excise Department under directives from the Awami League. This money shall not be deposited with the Central Government.
8. Railways should function normally. But only those offices which are involved in smooth running of the trains shall remain open. No cooperation should be extended to the mobilization of troops or arms for the repression of the people.
9. Posts and Telegraph offices shall function only for purpose of letters, telegrams and money orders within Bangladesh. But foreign mail service and foreign telegrams of all categories may be sent direct to the countries concerned. Inter-Wing teleprinter channel shall remain open for one hour between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, only for the purpose of enabling banks to send and receive by teleprinter such messages as are permitted under Directive 25.
Inter-Wing Press Telegrams only will be sent.
10 Only local and inter-district trunk telephone within Bangladesh shall function. Necessary sections required for repair and maintenance of the telephone system shall function.
11. Radio, Television and Newspapers shall function and shall give a complete version of all statements and news about the people's movements; otherwise those working in these establishments shall not cooperate.
12. All hospitals, health centres, sewerage works, jail hospitals, T.B. Clinics and Cholera Research Institute

shall function normally. Medical stores will also remain open and supplies to all hospitals, mofussil hospitals and village hospitals and rural hospitals shall continue.

13. Those departments of EPWAPDA which are necessary for electric supplies including repairs and maintenance, shall function.
14. Gas and water supplies including maintenance and repairs shall function normally.
15. Coal supplies for brick fields and other places shall continue.
16. Import, supply, storing and carrying of foodgrains should be made on priority basis.
17. Functioning of power pumps and movement of other tools and necessary fuel shall continue.
18. Work on tubewell sinking and irrigation shall go on.
19. East Pakistan Cooperative Bank, Central Cooperative Bank and other recognised Thana and Central Cooperative organiszations shall function.
20. The relevant departments of EPADC may function in accordance with the earlier directives.
21. Agricultural Development Bank and other Banks should give loans without interest to peasants in the cyclone affected areas.
22. The Agricultural Development Bank of Pakistan should arrange immediate loans for storing onions.
23. The government organisations and relevant autonomous bodies shall give money as before to the contractors for all flood control and other projects of EPWD and EPWAPDA.
24. All development and construction works of government or semi-government bodies shall continue.
25. Banks shall carry on their operations, including receiving deposits of any amount, inter-bank clearances without any limit within Bangladesh, inter-bank transfers within Bangladesh and drawings by T.T. or mail

transfers from West Pakistan and cash transactions subject to various restrictions. The State Bank and the National Bank of Pakistan shall continue to discount T.T. throughout Bangladesh on the basis that reimbursement shall be effected at Dacca.

Banks with head offices in West Pakistan shall obtain necessary funds to reimburse the State Bank and National Bank of Pakistan at Dacca.

Foreign travellers' cheques may be encashed by authorised dealers and diplomats may freely operate their accounts and foreign nationals may operate their foreign exchange accounts and may deal with foreign exchange remittances received by them.

There shall be no operation of lockers. No remittances shall be effected outside Bangladesh through the State Bank or otherwise.

Letters of credit may be opened against licences including those issued on surrender of bonus vouchers for imports from foreign countries. Barter documents (where goods have already been shipped) shall be valid. Pending export bills shall be collected through the Eastern Mercantile Bank and the Eastern Banking Corporation which banks shall comply with such directives as are issued to them in this regard.

26. The State Bank shall observe the same banking and office hours as other banks and shall remain open for taking all necessary steps for smooth functioning of the banking system of Bangladesh within the framework of restrictions defined above.

    P forms may be sanctioned and all approved remittances to foreign countries for students and other approved recipients may be permitted.

27. All private commercial and industrial organisations shall function as before.

28. All travel agents and foreign airline offices may function.

Sale proceeds realised by them should be deposited in any bank within Bangladesh.

29. Rickshaw, bus, auto-rickshaw, taxi etc., shall operate.

30. To keep the inland riverports functioning, relevant employees of East Pakistan Shipping Corporation, and IWTA shall work.

31. (a) Until further directives are issued no land revenue shall be realised, no excise duty shall be realised on salt produced in Bangladesh, no tax shall be realised on unmanufactured tobacco grown in Bangladesh, handloom weavers shall be entitled to purchase cotton yarn at non-duty-paid price.

(b) Subject to above, all provincial taxes, including amusement tax, tolls in respect of hats, bazars, bridges and ponds shall be realised and credited to the account of the Government of Bangladesh.

(c) All local taxes including octroi shall be paid.

(d) All direct central taxes, including customs duty, excise duty, sales tax hitherto collected and realised by the Central Government shall hence forward be collected by the collecting agencies, but shall not be credited to the Central Government account or be transferred or remitted to the Central Government. Such realisations shall be deposited in 'Special Accounts' in the Eastern Mercantile Bank and the Eastern Banking Corporation which banks shall comply with directives issued to them in this regard. All collecting agencies shall implement these directives and such other directives as may be issued from time to time.

(e) Direct Central taxes, such as income tax, shall not be realised till further directives.

32. Pakistan Insurance Corporation shall function. All insurance companies including Postal Life Insurance shall function.

33. The workers shall not join their factories. But they should go there to collect their wages on 30th of this month.
34. Hoisting of black flags on all house tops shall continue.
35. The relevant authorities shall do their duties keeping close contact with the Awami League Action Committee.

The People,
Dacca, March 16, 1971

28

This Commission can Serve no Useful Purpose

Mujib demanded a probe into the killing of unarmed civilians in Bangladesh during the last few days as one of his four pre-conditions for attending the session of the National Assembly as announced in the Race Course meeting of March 7, 1971. On March 17, the Martial Law Administration, Zone 'B' set up an Enquiry Commission 'to go into the circumstances which led to the calling of the Army in aid of civil power in various parts of East Pakistan between March 2 and March 9'. The Commission, according to the order, was to be headed by a Judge of the High Court of East Pakistan. While the Sheikh demanded a probe into the killings, the Martial Law authorities asked the Commission to ascertain the circumstances that led to the summoning of the Army. As a natural reaction, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman rejected the Commission since no useful purpose could be served by it. He also asked the people not to cooperate with the Commission in any capacity. Mujib set up his own probe body with Capt. Mansur Ali, leader of the Awami League Parliamentary Party in the East Pakistan Assembly, Khondkar Mushtaq Ahmed, Vice-President, East Pakistan Awami League, and Abidur Reza Khan, MNA-elect from Chittangong, and sent them to Chittagong to make on-the-spot enquiry of the disturbances there.

The full text of Mujib's statement rejecting the Government probe body issued on March 18, 1971 appears here.

This Commission can Serve no Useful Purpose

I regret that the Commission of Inquiry which has been announced, on the face of it cannot satisfy the demand voiced by me on behalf of the people of Bangladesh. Its very institution by a Martial Law Order and the provision for submission of its report to the Martial Law authority are highly objectionable. The terms of reference themselves betray the intention of pre-judging the most fundamental issue and to shut out inquiry into the real issues.

The only term of reference is: 'To go into the circumstances which led to the calling of the Army in aid of civil power in various parts of East Pakistan between March 2 and March 9'. The fundamental issue is thus pre-judged, since what has to be inquired into is whether the deployment and use of force was in aid of ulterior political purposes and not at all in aid of civil power. The Commission is further shut out from inquiring into the actual atrocities which have been reported from various parts of Bangladesh, involving thousands of casualties. Thus, even the number of casualties and the circumstances in which unarmed civilians were shot down cannot be enquired into.

Such a 'commission' can serve no useful purpose. Indeed such an inquiry would not at all be the genuine inquiry aimed at arriving at the truth but would be a mere device to mislead the people.

We cannot, therefore, accept such a 'commission'. The people of Bangladesh shall not cooperate with such a 'commission' nor serve as its members.

On behalf of the people we had made a four-point demand on the 7th of March 1971; one of those demands was for fair, impartial and public inquiry with proper terms of reference. The nominal and piece-meal acceptance of one of those points and that too in the manner described above, cannot contribute to the solution of the grave crisis that faces us.

Dawn,
Karachi, March 19, 1971

29

We Are Sure To Win

On March 22, 1971 the leading dailies of Dacca published special supplements captioned 'Emancipation of Bangladesh'. This timely supplement was sponsored by Bitopi Advertisers, one of the top advertising agencies in Bangladesh. The Observer group of newspapers, owned by Mr. Hamidul Huq Choudhury, a former Foreign Minister and Pakistan Democratic Party leader, declined to publish the supplement under that caption. However, they carried the supplement with their papers the next day, changing the caption to 'Bengal Today'. The Supplement carried three important articles by Mr. Rehman Sobhan, a Reader in the Economics Department at the University of Dacca and top economic adviser to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Professor Muzaffar Ahmad Choudhury, Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Dacca and Mr. Qamaruzzaman, General Secretary of All Pakistan Awami League. The copy and visuals of the advertisements of all Government and semi-Government organisations and other commercial establishments had radically changed to fit the mood of the Movement during those twentyfive days of March, 1971. The enthusiasm of the advertisers was demonstrated even more in the special supplement of March 22. It was planned to get a message from the Sheikh on this occasion. The Sheikh, when approached on March 19, gladly agreed, and signed a message prepared by the present editor and written in the editor's own handwriting. The facsimile of the message which appears below was published on the front page of the supplement with a three-column photograph of the Sheikh.

The English version of the message is reproduced here.

This struggle of ours is for the complete liberation of the seven crore people of Bangladesh. Our struggle will go on until our rights are secured. The people of Bangladesh will no longer be cowed down by bullets, guns and bayonets, for today the people are united.

We must be ready for any sacrifice in order to achieve our goal. Every home must become a fortress of resistance. Ours is a just demand. So we are sure to win. *Joi Bangla* !

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
19-3-1971

The People,
Dacca, March 22, 1971

30

No Compromise On Basic Issues

Between March 16 and 22, 1971 President Yahya Khan had six sessions with the Awami League President, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to sort out the political crisis in the country. The later developments in Bangladesh proved it beyond doubt that by these so-called constitutional talks, Yahya was only misleading the Awami League leaders and buying time for his Generals to prepare for an army crackdown in Bangladesh. On the opening day of the talks, the workers in Chittagong port refused to off-load a ship carrying arms and ammunitions from China. On March 19, while the Sheikh was engaged in talks with the President, the Army opened fire on the civilian population at Joydevpur, near Dacca. At least 20 people were killed on the spot. The incident disturbed Mujib so much that he told newsmen that he might not meet the President for talks scheduled for the next day. The situation was further aggravated by the imposition of curfew by the military authorities in Dacca on March 19. In Karachi, Mr. Bhutto threatened to initiate a civil disobedience movement throughout West Pakistan. Being summoned by the President, however, Mr. Bhutto arrived in Dacca on March 21 and faced tremendous agitation by an angry mob at the airport as well as in front of his hotel. The next day he joined President Yahya Khan and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in talks at the President House.

On March 22, the President again postponed the session of the National Assembly scheduled to begin from March 25, 'with a view to facilitating the process of enlarging areas of agreement

among the political parties'. In a different message on the eve of the Pakistan Day, Yahya Khan said: "The stage is now set for our elected representatives to work together for the common goal which would accommodate both East and West wings in a smoothly working harmonious system."

March 23 was observed as Resistance Day, which replaced Pakistan Day throughout Bangladesh. Everywhere the Bangladesh flag was hoisted in place of the Pakistani Crescent. The Students' League Resistance Force held a ceremonial parade at Dacca's Paltan Maidan where the Bangladesh flag was hoisted after singing the Tagore song 'Amar sonar Bangla ami tomai bhalobashi' (My golden Bengal, I love thee) which had replaced the national anthem of Pakistan. Almost all the foreign missions hoisted the Bangladesh flag. Only the Chinese embassy hoisted the Pakistani flag, and this was pulled down by students and was replaced by the Bangladesh flag.

After completing the Paltan Maidan ceremonies, the parading students proceeded towards the residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Mujib along with the leaders of the Students' Action Committee received the salute of the Resistance Force in front of his house. He also addressed the students briefly. Extracts in translation from the original speech appear here.

....There can be no compromise on the basic issues involved in the demands of the people of Bangladesh. We have shed much blood in the past, if need arises we will shed more blood. But we shall reach our goal of emancipation. The struggle will continue till our demands to live as free citizens of a free country are conceded....

The Muslim League meeting in Lahore from March 22 to 24 in 1940 had envisaged a State of Pakistan, in which the constituent units would be autonomous and sovereign....

We want a peaceful settlement of the problem. Whatever conspiracy the vested interests may indulge in, they will not be able to suppress the demands of the people. I hope nobody will try that. In the last 22 days of the struggle, the enemies of the people have been forced to recognise the strength of the people's

movement.

I urge you to maintain discipline in your struggle till the 75 million people of Bangladesh are liberated. A section of the people has tried to sabotage the movement by starting communal riots. . . . I regret to say that such an attempt was made at Saidpur.

I warn these people that any such attempts will fail because the people of Bangladesh are united today. We shall not bow our heads to any force. We shall free the people of Bangladesh.

Nobody can purchase my head. Others might betray the blood of the martyrs but I cannot. The people will not allow the blood of martyrs to go waste. . . .

You should continue the movement and prepare yourselves for any eventuality. I do not know whether I shall live to give the orders for intensified struggle. You must continue your struggle to realise your rights. . . .

Dawn,
Karachi, March 25, 1971

31

Ready to Face All Eventualities

During the non-cooperation movement, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had to address countless processions in front of his house everyday from early morning to late at night. All the processions brought out in the city in support of the movement had one route in common : Road 32 in the residential area of Dhanmandi in Dacca, from where the virtual administration of Bangladesh was run. On that road stood the modest double-storied residence of the Sheikh.

Yahya Khan cancelled his broadcast scheduled for March 23 without any explanation. The Awami League leaders conferred with the President's advisers on March 23 and 24. The leaders of the minority parties of West Pakistan and Mr. Bhutto's partymen left Dacca for West Pakistan on March 24. The political circles in Dacca apprehended some ominous reason in the delay of the much awaited annoucement of the President on the agreed solution of the political crisis.

March 25 brought the news of the death of at least 110 persons in different places of Bangladesh as a result of army firing. The people resisted the armed forces in off-loading arms from a ship in Chittagong port. There also several people were killed when the Army opened fire on them.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman issued a press statement condemning the firings and calling for a hartal throughout Bangladesh on March 27. Here is the text of the statement issued on March 25 a few hours before the army crackdown.

The arrival of the President in Dacca and his subsequent talks had led the people to expect that there was a realisation that the grave crisis engulfing the country could only be resolved politically. It was for this reason that I met the President. The President affirmed that there could only be a political solution of the crisis. Upon that promise, certain fundamental principles on which such a solution would be based were accepted by the President. Subsequently, my colleagues sat with the President's advisers to work out those principles.

We have thus done our duty and contributed our utmost towards the full attainment of a political solution. There is no reason or justification for any delay. If a political solution is desired by those concerned, they should realise that it is for them to take matters immediately to a conclusion and that to delay this would expose the country and its people to grave hazards.

It is, therefore, unfortunate that there is a regrettable delay in resolving the crisis politically. Indeed the critical situation already prevailing is being aggravated by renewed military activities, the pace of which according to reports from different parts of Bangladesh, is being stepped up.

I am shocked to hear of the military action in Saidpur, Rangpur and Joydevpur. There are reports of heavy firing upon the civilian population and of atrocities being committed on them. The police are being totally by-passed while a reign of terror is being unleashed. From Chittagong, reports are pouring in of heavy firing.

That is all the more regrettable at a time when the President is in Dacca for the declared purpose of resolving the crisis politically. I urge him to order immediately cessation of such military operations. It should be known that such atrocities and killing of unarmed people shall not go unchallenged. I am confident that the brave sons of Bangladesh are ready to face all eventualities in order to attain their goal, which is the emancipation of the people of Bangladesh. What is more reprehensible is that

certain elements have been deployed by the anti-people forces to foment tension between locals and non-locals. I have repeatedly re-affirmed that all those who live in Bangladesh, regardless of their place of origin or the language they speak. are our people and they should consider themselves as such and take full part in the struggle for the emancipation of Bangladesh. Their life, property and honour are our sacred trust.

It is, therefore, clear that those who are fomenting tension are doing so for the malicious purpose of sabotaging a political solution and creating a pretext for use of force against unarmed people. Let the people of the world take notice that while we have been exerting our utmost towards the attainment of a political solution, there are certain evil elements still bent upon making a last desperate bid to impose a solution by force. Let those evil forces of destruction know that their conspiracies cannot succeed, when seventyfive million people are united in their determination to make every sacrifice and to resist those who seek to impose upon them by force.

I condemn the firing that has taken place and the atrocities that have been committed in different parts of Bangladesh. A general strike shall be observed on 27th March 1971 throughout Bangladesh to protest against such firing.

I urge those concerned to desist from creating a situation of confrontation between the military and the unarmed civilian population. If they fail to take heed and continue to resort to military confrontation, they will bear full responsibility for aborting a political solution and for all the grave consequences that would follow.

I urge our heroic people to continue with their struggle. Our economy, however, must function normally and indeed every person must consider it his sacred duty to ensure that the economy functions with maximum efficiency. Our workers in the mills and factories bear a heavy responsibility in this matter. They must take all steps to maintain normal conditions in which maximum production can be attained.

Our movement shall go forward. The directives issued on 15th March, 1971 shall continue in force subject to the clarifications issued from time to time.

Dawn,
Karachi, March 26, 1971

32

Bangladesh is Independent

President Yahya Khan left Dacca secretly on March 25 around 5 p.m. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman got the news of Yahya's departure instantaneously. He could anticipate that the Army would take some sort of action and accordingly advised his prominent colleagues to go underground. His well-wishers insisted that the Sheikh should also go underground, but he declined.

Around 8.30 p.m. the news of probable military action spread throughout Dacca city like wild fire. People were terribly excited and came out on the streets to erect barricades on all important roads of the city.

The Army began moving in to the city around 10.30 p.m. They started their pre-planned action about an hour later. The sound of automatic weapons being used against the unarmed people was heard from all corners of the city.

Till 12.30 a.m. on March 26, some foreign journalists were able to maintain contact with the residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman over telephone. Then the telephones went dead. Later it was gathered from the neighbours that the Sheikh was arrested by the Pakistan Army around 1.30 a.m. Mujib made a formal declaration of the Independence of Bangladesh sometime between 12.30 a.m. and 1.30 a.m. on March 26, 1971.

Here are a few lines of the declaration in translation.

In the face of an unjust and treacherous action by the military authorities in Bangladesh, I do hereby declare that from today Bangladesh is a Sovereign and Independent People's Republic.

I urge the people of Bangladesh to defend the honour and integrity of Bangladesh.

From the Proclamation of Independence issued from Mujibnagar on April 10, 1971

Appendix 1

Extracts from the Resolution adopted by the All India Muslim League at Lahore on 24 March, 1940.

This session of the All India Muslim League emphatically reiterates that the scheme of Federation embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935 is totally unsuited to and unworkable in the peculiar conditions of this country and is altogether unacceptable to Muslim India....

Muslim India will not be satisfied unless the whole constitutional plan is reconsidered *de novo*, and that no revised plan would be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is framed with their approval and consent.

Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign: that adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them and in other parts of India where the Muslims are in a minority, adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious,

cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.

This session further authorizes the Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary.

Appendix 2

The Six-point Programme of the Awami League

Point no. 1

The Constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in the true sense on the basis of the Lahore Resolution and for a parliamentary form of government based on the supremacy of a directly elected legislature on the basis of universal adult franchise. The representation in the federal legislature shall be on the basis of population.

Point no. 2

The federal government shall be responsible only for defence and foreign affairs, and currency subject to the conditions provided in Point no. 3.

Point no. 3

There shall be two separate currencies mutually or freely convertible in each wing for each region, or in the alternative, a single currency, subject to the establishment of a federal reserve system in which there will be regional federal reserve banks which shall devise measures to prevent the transfer of resources and flight of capital from one region to another.

Point no. 4

Fiscal policy shall be the responsibility of the federating units. The federal government shall be provided with requisite revenue resources for meeting the requirements of defence and foreign affairs, which revenue resources would be automatically appropriable by the federal government in the manner provided and on the basis of the ratio to be determined by the procedure laid down in the Constitution. Such constitutional provisions would

ensure that the federal government's revenue requirements are met consistently with the objective of ensuring control over the fiscal policy by the governments of the federating units.

Point no. 5

Constitutional provisions shall be made to enable separate accounts to be maintained of the foreign exchange earnings of each of the federating units, under the control of the respective governments of the federating units. The foreign exchange requirement of the federal government shall be met by the governments of the federating units on the basis of a ratio to be determined in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Constitution. The regional governments shall have power under the constitution to negotiate foreign trade and aid within the framework of the foreign policy of the country, which shall be the responsibility of the federal government.

Point no. 6

The government of the federating units shall be empowered to maintain a militia or para-military force in order to contribute effectively towards national security.

Appendix 3

Six-point Formula—Our Right to Live

I have placed before the country a Six-point Programme as basic principles of a firm solution of the country's inter-wing political and economic problems. I expected and in fact was ready to welcome criticism. But instead of criticising the programme and pointing out its defects, if there be any, a class of people has started hurling abuses at and ascribing disruptionist motive to me. Normally I would have ignored these vilifications firstly because these abusive voices are too familiar, these grimacing faces are too well-known, and these sallying patterns are too old to deserve anything but such ignoration; secondly because I have no manner of doubt that my Six-point Programme has truly reflected the mind and correctly represented the demands of fifty-five million East Pakistanis of their right to live. Neither have I any doubt that all right-thinking patriotic elements of West Pakistan agree with me on these points. This has been amply demonstrated by the newspaper writings and reports, statements and speeches by all sections of the intelligentsia, students and workers. This tremendous country-wide support to the Six-point Programme is spontaneous. It is spontaneous because these demands are no new points invented afresh by me or any individual, but are in reality longstanding demands of the people and pledges of their leaders awaiting fulfilment for decades.

This being the case. I am confident that the mischievous propaganda and motivated campaign carried on by the vested interests through their agents and protectors will fail to mislead our people. They will surely not forget that whenever in the past any demand was made by East Pakistanis, however small, simple and reasonable it might be, these beneficiaries and agents of vested interests kicked up the self-same dust by raising the

well-known cries of 'Islam in danger', 'disruption of Pakistan' and 'Sovereign Bengal' etc. It was the same set of people who discovered 'hidden hand of India' in our simplest demand for inclusion of Bengali as a State Language along with Urdu. These are the people who brazenly dubbed our *Sher-e-Bangla* as a traitor and incarcerated our beloved leader Suhrawardy on a fantastic charge of wrecking Pakistan with the help of foreign money. Nothing is too mean for them to achieve their selfish objective which is perpetuation of their exploitation of the people of East Pakistan. I know, our people are quite aware of these events not of very distant past.

But I also know that the mischief-making potentialities of these enemies of the people are inexhaustible; that their resources are unlimited; that they are a multi-colour variety of human species with sub-human conscience. It is this variety who will be found in large number in the camp of the ruling coterie in the name of 'unity, faith and discipline'; they will be found in larger number in the opposition camp for the sake of 'Islam and democracy'. But wherever they may be, in whatever colour, under whichever garb, they actually belong to one and the same camp, that is, the camp of the enemies of the people. They are thus solidly united in their attitude of denial towards East Pakistan. So naturally they will leave no stone unturned to achieve their objective as they have done in the past. Whenever it suited their purpose to think that the people of East Pakistan were secretly inclined towards Communism, they turned the stone of American aid and assistance by signing military pacts to fight communism and thereby save East Pakistan from secessionist design engineered by the Communists. If, on the other hand, it suited their convenience to imagine that East Pakistan was too much wedded to Western democracy and too much attached to U.S.A., they hastened to turn the stone of aid and assistance of Communist China to save East Pakistan from falling a prey to dollar imperialism. So, on this occasion also they will come to the field to fight the Six-point Programme just

as they did to the 21-point Programme in the past. They have, in fact, already taken the field with varieties of weapons brandished by different heroes of numerous battle-fields. The target is the same; it is the Six-point. Therefore, it is quite in the fitness of things that President Ayub, Choudhury Mohammad Ali and Maulana Maudoodi, outwardly three avowed mutual enemies, weilding their respective weapons from three antipodal horizons, are aiming poisoned arrows on the same target of the Six-point.

I, therefore, deem it my duty to issue this booklet as an explanatory note to the Six-point Programme and fervently appeal to the democratic forces in general, and the Awami Leaguers in particular, to spread out in the country and carry the message of the Six-point to every hearth and home. Now that the Six-point Programme has been formally adopted by the Awami League, it has undoubtedly become the national demand of the people, particularly the people of East Pakistan. I hope they will find this booklet useful in their confrontations with agents of the vested interests who are likely to be lying in ambush everywhere.

Point 1

In this point I have recommended as follows:

The Constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense on the basis of the Lahore Resolution, and Parliamentary form of Government with supremacy of Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.

It will be seen that this point consists in the following seven ingredients, viz: (a) Pakistan shall be a Federation, (b) it shall be based on the Lahore Resolution, (c) its Government shall be of Parliamentary form, (d) it must be responsible to the Legislature, (e) the Legislature must be supreme, (f) it must be directly elected, and (g) election must be on the basis of universal adult franchise.

Let the opponents of the Six-point Programme speak out. Which of these seven ingredients are they opposed to? Let the

people know who are federalists and who are unitarists. Those who are unitarists are definitely against the Lahore Resolution. Conversely, those who are opposed to the Lahore Resolution are definitely unitarists. So let it be decided once for all who own and who do not own the Lahore Resolution by which Pakistan was created and is rightly called the Pakistan Resolution. The people who disown the Lahore Resolution disown Pakistan itself. It is evidently those people who did not raise their little finger in the struggle for Pakistan but subsequently jumped on it to grab power after it was created with the blood and tears of the people. These opportunists and job-hunters cannot naturally have any regard for or attachment to the sanctity of such an historic Resolution which brought about a Revolution in the sub-continent and created Pakistan. Even amongst those who swear by the Pakistan Resolution, there are some pseudo-federalists. They pay lip-service to the Lahore Resolution but disregard it by speaking against the very fundamental principle of Federation and by introducing extra-political controversies. This confusion has been further confounded by the power that be by the forcible addition of political aberrations like basically controlled democracy. It was against such future personal likes and dislikes, whims and caprices, hunger and thirst for power of individuals, that the Lahore Resolution was pledged as a guarantee by the creators of Pakistan under the able guidance of *Quaid-e-Azam*. It will be sheer political dishonesty to deviate from the Lahore Resolution after Pakistan was created by people's votes obtained on the basis of that Resolution. If it is now found necessary to so deviate for the sake of stability and integrity of Pakistan itself, the people will certainly agree to such changes or even complete reversal. But in any event it is the people who will decide and not any body else. As far as the people of East Pakistan are concerned they in the 1954 general election overwhelmingly voted for a constitution based on the Lahore Resolution. If, however, any body has any doubt about their present attitude due to lapse of long twelve years, we are

prepared to face another referendum on the issue. Until that is done by a specific referendum on universal adult suffrage the Lahore Resolution and all its corollaries remain the Magna Carta of the people of Pakistan, and the rulers and the leaders are bound to give them a Constitution based on the Resolution.

Point 2

This point recommends as follows:

Federal Government shall deal with only two subjects, viz: Defence and Foreign Affairs, and all other residuary subjects shall vest in the Federating States.

Let us dispassionately discuss whether a two-subject Centre will be sufficiently strong to be a respectable Federation. It should be borne in mind that what makes a Federation strong is not heaps of subjects under it. A Federation becomes strong by the loyalty and affection in which it is held by the people in peace and the allegience they owe and obedience they show it in war. The happy and strong people represented through efficient and strong units that make the Federation, are the real source of its strength irrespective of the number of subjects dealt with by it. Indeed, a State which serves the base rather than the apex is really the strongest. It is now a well established principle of political science that decentralization rather than centralization makes the work of a State efficient both in the administrative and in the development spheres. It is also a well recognised principle of Federation that only those subjects be in the Federal list which can be jointly managed more efficiently and profitably. It is the same principle that is underlying the system of Local Self-Government like District Councils and Municipalities. The very concept of Federation is based on the maxim of unity in diversity and union without over-centralization.

It was on this principle that in 1946 the Cabinet Mission proposed an Indian Federation with only three subjects viz: Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communication. Both the Congress and the Muslim League accepted the Cabinet Plan. The

fact that ultimately it did not materialize due to a hitch elsewhere is a different matter and quite irrelevant to the issue now before us. Now, the British Government by proposing the Plan and the Congress and the Muslim League by accepting it have all demonstrated their agreement on the feasibility of a Federation with only three subjects. The only difference between the Cabinet Plan and my proposal is that I have given two subjects instead of three given in the Cabinet Plan. Even that difference is only apparent and not real as will be seen in my explanation to the Point 3 given later on. That explanation will show that I too have given three subjects to the Centre and not two. Only I have recommended Currency in place of Communication as had been earlier done in the famous 21-point Programme. I have omitted Communication for obvious reasons. The basic principle on which subjects are handed over to a Federation, as has been earlier, is the oneness and indivisibility of the interest of the federating units in the subjects concerned. In the case of an undivided Indian Federation, communication was really such a subject. In it, all the federating units would have been commonly interested and could have been more efficiently and profitabily run if jointly managed by the Federation. An unbroken railway line and a non-stop through railway train could have run from Khybar to Chittagong. This would have been so because of the geographical contiguity. Not so Pakistan. Pakistan being comprised of two geographical units separated by over a thousand miles of foreign territory, cannot possibly have any unbroken line of communication between the two wings. The two wings being themselves two compact geographical areas, must have their own system of communication separately organized and managed. It can, therefore, never be a Federal subject. By transferring the railways to the Provinces though after prolonged procrastination the present regime has reluctantly admitted the hard fact of geography. The same will have to be done also in the case of Posts and Telegraphs and all other branches of communication.

In this connection another point need be clarified. Here I have recommended designation of the federating units as 'states' instead of 'provinces' as is now done. This very mention of the word 'state' is liable to be mischievously misinterpreted by the unitarist and pseudo-federalists. They will tell the unwary public: "Look, Mujib is wanting independent States." This would be viciously wrong. Everywhere in different Federations of the world federating units are called 'states' and not 'provinces'. U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Federal Germany, Federation of Malaysia, and last of all our neighbour India, all have designated their units as 'states' instead of 'provinces'. Our next door neighbours like West Bengal and Assam are 'states' of the Indian Union and not 'provinces'. That designation of Indian provinces has not rendered their Union loose or their Central Government weak. If Assam and West Bengal can have the dignity and honour of being called 'states' without impairing the solidarity of Bharati Union, why can't we have the same dignity and honour without impairing the solidarity of Pakistan Federation? Why are our rulers so allergic to our dignity?

Point 3

In this point, I have recommended either of the following two measures with regard to our Currency, viz:

A. Two separate but freely convertible currencies for two wings may be introduced, or

B. One currency for the whole country may be maintained. In this case, effective constitutional provisions are to be made to stop flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. Separate Banking Reserve is to be made and separate fiscal and monetary policy to be adopted for East Pakistan.

From the above it will be seen that I have not recommended the straightway taking of Currency out of the Federal list. If my recommendation contained in B above is accepted, Currency remains a Central subject. In this case, the only difference is that I have recommended the creation of separate Reserve Banks

for two wings in a Federal Reserve System as obtained in U.S.A. According to this arrangement, the State Bank of Pakistan will have two Reserve Banks for two wings. The currency for East Pakistan shall be issued through the East Pakistan Reserve Bank and shall be marked 'East Pakistan' or simply 'Dacca'. Similarly, West Pakistan currency shall be issued through West Pakistan Reserve Bank and shall be marked 'West Pakistan' or simply 'Lahore'.

This is the only way by which we can save East Pakistan from sure economic ruination by effectively stopping flight of capital from this wing to the other. The geographical separateness has made the two wings *ipso facto* two economic units. An economic convulsion, either for the better or for the worse, in one wing has no corresponding convulsion in the other wing. So progress and development in the one does not in the least benefit the other. These economic incidents are quite independent of each other in the two wings. Expenditure in one cannot create employment in the other. This economic independence and separateness of the two wings is correctly reflected in their respective price and wage structures including price of gold. This is what is known as the absence of mobility of labour and capital. This immobility of capital, however, does not prevent flight of capital. This is how it happens under the present dispensation:

We are supposed to belong to one indivisible economy. We have one currency. There is no distinguishing mark to show the currency circulation wingwise. We are under only one Finance Ministry situated in and operating from West Pakistan presided over always by a West Pakistani Minister formulating financial, fiscal and monetary policies through one single Central Bank, that is, the State of Bank of Pakistan, also located in West Pakistan, issuing money minted, coined and printed in West Pakistan. This money after travelling and meandering in circulation throughout the country journeys back to and rests in accumulation in West Pakistan. Along with the head office of the Government Central Bank, the head offices of all the joint-stock

Banks, except one or two small ones of very recent origin, are also located in West Pakistan. The seat of the Government being located in West Pakistan, head offices of the three Armed Forces, all Foreign Missions and almost all foreign and national trades and industries organizations are situated in that wing. As a result, all money transactions done in East Pakistan are instantaneously transferred to West Pakistan. All share money of joint-stock companies, all deposits of Banks, their security money, all Government reserves, all earnings, profits and savings of trade and industry operating in East Pakistan move in a matter of seconds to West Pakistan. Any one conversant with banking operation knows well that only barely ten per cent of the entire deposits need be kept ready for payment and the rest can be and generally is invested. Savings when invested become capital. This investment is naturally done in West Pakistan as West Pakistan's capital. This is how capital formation in West Pakistan has been so rapid. This again is how there has been total absence of capital formation in East Pakistan. As investment means employment, this incident has meant the employment in West Pakistan only. As capital formation is followed by rapid industrialization, this has meant industrialization of West Pakistan alone. This process will continue unless and until the prevailing one-way traffic of finance is effectively checked by stopping this flight of capital. This can be done and capital investment can be generated in East Pakistan only by creating a Reserve Bank for East Pakistan as suggested by me. It is the only way to save East Pakistan from economic extinction. This reform in our currency system while saving East Pakistan from economic collapse will keep currency a Central subject as a symbol of our unity and oneness.

If, however, our West Pakistani brothers think otherwise, then my other alternative may be adopted. Under that arrangement Currency will, no doubt, be a provincial subject, but that will not weaken our Centre. Neither will it affect the oneness of Pakistan. For even then we can have the same currency symbol

by mutual discussion and agreement. And for the other, a Federation can effectively work and be strong and stable without Currency as its subject. The Cabinet Mission recommended an Indian Federal Centre without Currency in the Federal list. Had it been thought unworkable, the British Government would not have recommended it, nor would the Congress and the Muslim League have accepted it.

Point 4

In this point, I have recommended that the power of taxation and revenue collection shall vest in the federating units and that the Federal Centre will have no such power. The Federation will have a share in the State taxes for meeting their required expenditure. The Consolidated Federal Fund shall come out of a levy of certain percentage of all State taxes.

It is this proposal that seems to have most annoyed the unitarists and pseudo-federalists. They are making a lot of noise and kicking up dust of confusion such as disintegration and disruption. These are old bogeys and shibboleths used by the vested interests against all reforms in all ages. They need not worry any Pakistani. The fact is that a strong Federation can successfully work and is working without the power of taxation. It makes the federation rather stronger. This is so because taxation is a duty and necessity rather than a right and power. Levying taxes and collecting them is a responsibility and a bothera-tion. It is just like manually earning one's own livelihood. In our daily life we find people wanting to better employ themselves in finer and nobler work, lease out their properties to others at fixed rent leaving to them the arduous task of collecting small amounts from individual tenants and earning petty sums from day-to-day transactions. The monarchs of the past used to, and land-lords of the present do, lease out their realms in *ijara* for tax collection. The Central authorities in all ages have tried to be spared the botheration of tax collection for their own maintenance. It is only the *banya* mentality of the present day

rulers that impels them to handle all money matters themselves. A little reflection will show that the right and power concerned do not rest in the act of tax collection but in the money so collected. If a Central Government is constitutionally assured of the required amount, why should it bother about the actual collection? In the case of a Federation it is only the fiscal taxation in which it is interested. The rest of the purposes of taxation, viz: protective, social, commercial and moral, are the responsibility of the federating units. This is what is done in the U.S.A., and some other Federations. In the U.S.S.R., even the fiscal taxation is not done by the Union. There is no Finance Minister and Finance Ministry in the Union Government of the Soviet Union. The Finance Ministries and Ministers are all with the Federating Republics. They meet the requirements and serve the purposes of the Union Government. Have these arrangements weakened the Central authorities of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.? It was with this knowledge and experience of the working of a Federation that the Cabinet Mission offered an Indian Federation without the power of taxation and it was for the same reason that the Congress and the Muslim League accepted the offer. It will, therefore, be seen that a Federation can be firmly provided with its fiscal finances without being burdened with the duty of tax collection. My proposal is precisely to this effect. According to my recommendation, the Constitution will provide that a certain percentage of the Revenue collections on all heads shall automatically be credited to the Federal Fund by the Reserve Banks, on which amount the unit Governments shall have no control. Constitutional provisions may also be made empowering the Federation to raise funds to meet the increased Defence expenditure at the time of war including expansion of Federal jurisdiction in such emergencies. It is, therefore, sheer bunkum to call the autonomists the disruptors of Pakistan. On the contrary, relieving the Federation of the burden of tax collection will have the following salutary effect, viz:

(a) The Federation will have more time to devote in matters of Defence and External Relations and to act as a unifying force.

(b) Wastage due to overlapping, duplication and litigation etc. will be saved and money thus saved and officials thus relieved will be available for better and nobler utilization.

(c) The tax and revenue collection will be cheaper and easier.

(d) Economy of having a single authority for tax collection will have been achieved.

(e) It will pave the way for introducing and adopting the most modern taxation method, viz. single taxation.

Point 5

In this point, I have recommended that:

(1) There shall be two separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings of the two wings.

(2) Earnings of East Pakistan shall be under the control of of East Pakistan Government and that of West Pakistan under the control of West Pakistan Government.

(3) Foreign exchange requirement of the Federal Government shall be met by the two wings either equally or in a ratio to be fixed.

(4) Indigenous products shall move free of duty between two wings.

(5) The Constitution shall empower the unit Governments to establish trade and commercial relations with, set up trade missions in and enter into agreements with foreign countries.

Now, a panoramic glance at the economic history of Pakistan since its creation will show the following consistent incidents:

(a) East Pakistan has earned bulk of the annual foreign exchange of Pakistan.

(b) East Pakistan's earnings have been spent in West Pakistan in industrializing that wing and earnings from those industries have been reinvested in West Pakistan as the earnings of that wing.

(c) East Pakistan's earnings are not being spent in East Pakistan on the plea of its inability to absorb them due to absence of capital formation.

(d) Import to East Pakistan is less than her export, whereas import to West Pakistan is more than her export.

(e) Two-thirds of Pakistan's foreign exchange is earned by jute; but that earning is utilized neither for the benefit of the jute-growers nor for East Pakistan.

(f) Almost all foreign aids and loans are secured against foreign exchange earned by East Pakistan; but they are spent in West Pakistan on the same plea of non-absorbing capacity of East Pakistan. The irony is that interest on these loans and their instalments are being borne by East Pakistan.

Now, the cumulative effects of these economic incidents, all of which are artificial, are the following consequences, viz.

(i) East Pakistan has not been industrialized sufficiently.

(ii) The little industrialization that has been done has been done by West Pakistanis or by people other than East Pakistanis with all the characteristics of foreign investments both in the matter of employment and profit earning.

(iii) There is chronic inflation causing soaring high prices of commodities with all its concomitants like blackmarketing and profiteering bringing untold miseries to the life of the people.

(iv) Jute-growers are not only not getting fair economic price for their produce but even the cost of production is denied to them resulting in their perpetual indebtedness and progressive impoverishment.

These are man-made iniquities and are, therefore, remediable. The obvious remedies are, firstly, to industrialize East Pakistan to produce wealth among and provide employment for East Pakistanis; secondly, to check inflation by equalizing import and export and thereby supplying commodities to the people at reasonable prices; thirdly, to nationalize jute trade and thereby give fair price to the growers and ensure the state's earnings in foreign exchange. It was with this last object in view that

Awami League Government set up the Jute Marketing Corporation in 1957. It was subsequently reduced to nothing by the vested interests with the help of the Central Government.

Each and every one of these steps presupposes acceptance of the above proposals recommended by me.

Point 6

In this point, I have recommended setting up of a militia or a para-military force for East Pakistan. This is neither unreasonable nor new. We had pledged in the famous 21-point programme in 1954 that we would give arms and uniforms to our Ansars.

Neither is the proposal unprecedented and impracticable. There are instances where such para-military territorial forces are maintained in outlying regions. We ourselves had one such regiment from before Independence. It was the Eastern Rifles. After Independence, it became East Pakistan Rifles. The present regime has taken this away from the hands of East Pakistan Government.

East Pakistan is the home of the majority of Pakistanis. To defend it is the political obligation as well as moral duty of the Government of Pakistan. Why then should it be necessary for East Pakistanis to demand it ? Why do they not do it on their own initiative? How and with what conscience do they say that defence of East Pakistan lies in West Pakistan? Does it not tantamount to saying that the mouth, the belly and the stomach of East Pakistan lie in West Pakistan? How will the arms, ammunitions and wealth in West Pakistan help East Pakistan when transport between the wings can be snapped in a matter of seconds? Has not the recent 17-days war proved our utter helplessness? How can one brag that some event in Warsaw saved East Pakistan? It is the defence policy of our Government that has reduced us to this position. Inspite of all this we want a united Defence of the country and to retain it as a Central subject. But at the same time we want that East

Pakistan be made self-sufficient in the matter of Defence; that an Ordnance Factory, a Military Academy and the Navy Headquarter must be set up in East Pakistan. These things were actually demanded in 1954. Nothing, however, has been done in the course of twelve long years. We do not yet know when these will be done.

So in the meantime we want to make our own Defence arrangement in a small way with unsophisticated weapons suited to our own field craft within easy reach of our limited resources. What is the objection? Where does it lie? It is not easy to comprehend. Neither is it easy to understand why a Fund separately raised for East Pakistan war purposes is promptly taken over by the Centre.

An Appeal

Now, before concluding, I want to submit a few words to my West Pakistani brethren:

Firstly, they should not run away with the idea that whatever I have stated above, I have done in the interest of East Pakistan only. It is not so. In each of my Six-point Programme is inherent a corresponding benefit to my West Pakistani brethren. They are sure to derive equal benefit out of their implementation.

Secondly, when I speak of East Pakistan's wealth being flown to and concentrated in West Pakistan I only mean regional concentration. I do not, thereby, mean that this wealth has reached the masses of West Pakistan. No, I do not and cannot mean that. I know there are millions like us in West Pakistan who also are unfortunate victims of this economic exploitation. I also know that the entire wealth of the country is concentrated in the hands of a few families. This will continue till the capitalistic pattern of our society is not changed. But before that, this regional exploitation must cease. I, however, do not blame West Pakistanis for this regional exploitation.

Thirdly, it is the geographical situation and the unnatural

system that is being pursued which are responsible for this injustice. Take only one instance:

Had the capital of Pakistan been located in East Pakistan instead of West Pakistan this regional exploitation would have occurred in reverse. 62% of our Revenue that is being spent on our Defence forces, and 32% of our Revenue that is being spent on our Central Administration would have all been spent in East Pakistan instead of West Pakistan. The well-known Public Finance maxim that "the expenditure of the Government is the income of the people and income of Government is the expenditure of the people" would have worked in favour of East Pakistan instead of West Pakistan. This 94% of our total Revenue which has been annually spent in West Pakistan, and thus formed the income of West Pakistan, would have in that case been spent in and enriched East Pakistan. The seat of the Government being in West Pakistan, all the three Headquarters of the Armed Forces and all Central institutions and Foreign Missions have got their head offices in West Pakistan as a matter of course. Consequently, all their spendings are done in that wing. All these spendings would have been in East Pakistan had the seat of the Government been here. East Pakistan would have been enriched and West Pakistan impoverished to that extent and in that proportion.

In that event, you, the West Pakistanis, would have made the same demands for regional justice for which you are condemning us, the East Pakistanis, and ascribing all sorts of evil motives. In that case you would have realized that there was no other motive than the motive of self-preservation. In that context, when West Pakistanis would have made such demands of regional justice, do you know what would have been our attitude? We, East Pakistanis, would have straightway accepted your demands instead of calling you bad names like provincial, narrow-minded and disruptionist, we would have at once conceded that it was your right to demand justice and equality and it was your duty to do so. Nay, we would have gone further.

We would not have waited for you to make these demands. Instead, we would have met your requirements before you would have demanded them. We really believe in justice, equality and fairplay amongst brothers. A State is nothing if not a big family. Even in a family, eating by one member does not fill the stomach of another. So, how and with what conscience do you call us selfish for demanding our share? What will others call you who are not only enjoying your own share but devouring the share of your brothers also? We are, however, demanding our share only, not yours too. We want to live with you as equal partners, not exploiters.

Fourthly, if we happen to have more than enough, we can even sacrifice something for you from out of our share. We did so in the past. Do not you remember? Please recall:

(1) In the first Constituent Assembly we had 44 and you had 28 representatives. If we wanted we could most democratically have brought the Capital and Headquarters of the three Armed Forces to East Pakistan. We did not.

(2) Out of sheer brotherly feeling and sense of equality we elected 6 West Pakistanis to Constituent Assembly from East Pakistan by East Pakistani votes.

(3) By our majority we could have made Bengali our only State Language. We, however, demanded and got both Urdu and Bengali.

(4) By majority of votes we could have framed a Constitution favourable to East Pakistan.

(5) To remove any possible complex of domination we sacrificed our majority and accepted parity on your assurance that you would concede parity in all respects.

Fifthly, the above should be enough to convince West Pakistani brothers that we, East Pakistanis, are really consumed with a sense of brotherly equality towards you by which we want to live in honour and dignity. That we are capable of making sacrifices for you, if you need it, has also been proved in the past. Had the Capital been in East Pakistan we would have on our own

initiative set up a real Second Capital in West Pakistan, not merely a hoax of a Capital. We would never have taken advantage of that vantage position and would not have grabbed all the important offices ourselves. We would not have captured all the high and lucrative posts of West Pakistan like chairmanships of Cotton Board, P.I.D.C., Railway Board, P.C.S., Port Trust and WAPDA etc. We would not have thought of capturing the Governorship of your wing. On the contrary, we would have equitably distributed the high offices between the people of the two wings, we would have made effective arrangements for spending Central revenues equitably between East and West Pakistan, we would have extended regional and provincial autonomy instead of curtailing them. We would never have allowed any disparity to grow between two wings either political, administrative or economic. We would never have done anything to create any feeling that because we, East Pakistanis, are in a majority, because the seat of the Government is here, we are, therefore, the masters of Pakistan. We would rather have done everything to make you feel that this country belongs to you as well as to us, both in thought and in action. We would have shared State powers equally with you.

We believe that this feeling of absolute equality, sense of inter-wing justice and impartiality is the very basis of Pakistani patriotism. Only he is fit to be a leader of Pakistan who is imbued with and consumed by such patriotism. A leader who sincerely believes that the two wings of Pakistan are really two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two rows of teeth, two hands and two legs of the body-politic of Pakistan, a leader who feels that to make Pakistan healthy and strong one must make each one of these pairs equally healthy and strong, a leader who earnestly believes that to weaken any one of these limbs is to weaken Pakistan as a whole, a leader who zealously holds that any one who deliberately or knowingly weakens any limb of Pakistan is an enemy of the country and a leader who is ready to take strong measures against such enemies, is the only person entitled

to claim the national leadership of Pakistan. Pakistan is a magnificent country with an uncommonly wide horizon. To be fit to become its leader one must possess a similarly magnificent heart with an uncommon breadth of vision.

Sixthly, let me humbly remind my West Pakistani brothers and sisters that when we demanded Bengali to be made one of the two State Language of Pakistan you condemned it as a move to undo Pakistan. When again we demanded joint electorate particularly in the context of parity in representation demanded by you, you condemned our demand to have been inspired from across the border. Both of these two demands have now been accepted; but there has been no undoing of Pakistan due to their acceptance. Does it not put you to shame that every bit of reasonable demand of East Pakistan has got to be secured from you at tremendous cost and after bitter struggle as if snatched from unwilling foreign rulers as a reluctant concession? Does it do you any credit? Please put a stop to such attitude once for all. Please be brothers instead of rulers.

In conclusion, I fervently appeal to my countrymen to deeply ponder over the formula put forward by me. They will find that none of the items in my Six-point Programme is either unjust, impractical or disruptive of the country's integrity. I hope I have succeeded, in the short space of this booklet, in showing that the acceptance of these points will not weaken Pakistan but will on the contrary make it stronger.

But the vested interests for obvious reasons will not agree. They have got their own way of judging things. To them, only continuation and the perpetuation of their exploitation mean stability of a Society and a State. To them, any body who disturbs or threatens to disturb this process of exploitation is a traitor and a disruptor. This is neither new nor surprising. Our great forebears like Fazlul Huq and Suhrawardy had to fall victims to such vitriolics. In taking up the cause of the exploited masses one must, therefore, be ready and prepared for such vilifications and incarcerations. To my lot have fallen

many such trials and tribulations in the past. Through the blessings of my superiors, comradeship of my colleagues and affectionate support of my countrymen, God in His infinite mercy gave me courage and fortitude enough to withstand those oppressions. With this boundless affection of my countrymen as my asset, I am fully prepared to make any sacrifice in their service. The life of any individual like myself is nothing compared to the salvation of the people of my country. I know of no nobler battle than to fight for the rights of the exploited millions. This is the lesson I have learnt at the feet of my political master Suhrawardy. He is no longer in our midst to guide us. But I am determined to live upto that lesson and keep his flag flying. The country is passing through the darkest hour of her life. At such a difficult time, Awami League Council has placed the heavy responsibility of its Presidentship on my already overburdened shoulder. But through *Allah*'s mercy I am no shirker. I am not afraid of work. So I have with all humility accepted the great responsibility. I have great faith in my people. I also know that the darkest hour of night is just a harbinger of dawn. My beloved countrymen will only pray to *Allah* so that He may continue to give me mental strength and physical fitness to devote the rest of my life in fighting for restoration of their rights which have been forcibly snatched away.

(*Issued by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as President of the Awami League on March* 23, 1966).

Appendix 4

The Eleven-point Demands of East Pakistan Students All Party Committee of Action

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1. (a) Restoration of provincialized colleges to their original status.
   (b) Extension in number of schools and colleges.
   (c) Night shift arrangements in Government colleges.
   (d) 50 per cent reduction in tution fees.
   (e) Bengali as medium of instruction as well as work in all offices.
   (f) Hostel charges to be subsidized by 50 per cent.
   (g) Increase in salaries of teachers.
   (h) Free and compulsory education up to class VIII.
   (i) Medical University to be set up and Medical Council Ordinance to be withdrawn.
   (j) Facilities for condensed course for Polytechnic students.
   (k) Train and bus concessions.
   (l) Job opportunity guarantee.
   (m) Repeal of University Ordinance and full autonomy for universities.
   (n) Repeal of National Education Commission and Hamoodur Rahman Reports.
2. Parliamentary democracy on the basis of universal franchise.
3. (a) Federal form of government and sovereign legislature.
   (b) Federal Government's powers to be confined to defence, foreign policy and currency.
4. Sub-federation of Baluchistan, North West Frontier Province and Sind with regional autonomy for each unit.
5. Nationalization of banks, insurance companies and all big industries.

6. Reduction in rates of taxes and revenues on peasants.
7. Fair wages and bonus for workers.
8. Flood control measures for East Pakistan.
9. Withdrawal of all emergency laws, security acts and other prohibitive orders.
10. Quit SEATO, CENTO and Pakistan-US military pacts.
11. Release of all detainees and political prisoners including those of Agartala Conspiracy Case.

Appendix 5

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Defence Statement Before the Special Tribunal of the 'Agartala Conspiracy Case'*

Ever since my school days, I had ceaselessly worked for the achievement of Pakistan and was a very active member of the Muslim League organisation in pre-Independence India and Bengal and worked for the realisation of Pakistan even at the cost of my studies.

After Independence, we organised the Awami League in 1949 under the leadership of late Mr H. S. Suhrawardy after the Muslim League had betrayed the aspirations of the people of Pakistan. The Awami League was and is a constitutional democratic organisation.

In 1954, I was elected a member of the Provincial Assembly and was later elected a member of the National Parliament. Twice I became Minister in the Government of East Pakistan. I also led the Parliamentary delegation to the People's Republic of China. For organising a constitutional opposition party for the welfare of the masses I had already suffered a few years in jail by this time.

After the imposition of martial law, the present regime started oppressing me. They arrested me on October 12, 1958 under the East Pakistan Public Safety Ordinance and kept me detained without trial for about a year and a half. While I

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*This statement has mainly been reproduced from English language newspaper reports. For certain portions where English reports were not available, translations have been included from Bengali newspaper reports to complete the statement. These portions have been indicated by square brackets.

was thus detained, they started half a dozen criminal cases against me, but I was honourably acquitted in all of them. I was released from detention in December 1959.

At the time of my release, I was served with orders of restriction, i.e. that if I were to leave Dacca I was to inform the Special Branch in writing with the particulars of the places I was to visit and on return to Dacca also I was required to inform the Special Branch of my return in writing. I was always shadowed by the Intelligence people.

Then again when my leader, the late Mr. Suhrawardy, was arrested in 1962 on the eve of the promulgation of the present Constitution, I was also put behind bars under the Public Safety Ordinance and detained without trial for about six months.

After the death of Mr. Suhrawardy, the Awami League was revived in January 1965 in both the wings of Pakistan as a political party and we decided to fight the Presidential election as a component of the Combined Opposition Party, which nominated Miss Fatima Jinnah as the Opposition candidate for the Presidential post against the candidature of Mr. Ayub Khan and started election campaign. The regime again started oppressing and harassing me by starting a number of prosecutions.

During the 1965 war with India, I was one of the political leaders who condemned the Indian aggression and asked my party and the people to lend full support to the Government's war efforts. My organisation, the East Pakistan Awami League, also issued circulars to all its units urging them to help the war efforts in every possible way.

During this war, at the all-party conference held at the East Pakistan Governor's House, I along with other political leaders of this wing issued a joint statement condemning Indian aggression and asked the people to work unitedly and help the country's war effort. After the war, when President Ayub Khan visited East Pakistan I and all other political leaders met him on invitation, and appealed to the President to give regional

autonomy to East Pakistan and to make it self-sufficient in defence in the light of our experiences during the war when East Pakistan was completely disconnected from West Pakistan and the rest of the world.

I also supported the Tashkent Declaration as my people and myself believe that all international disputes should be settled by peaceful means as we believe in world peace for progress.

In early 1966, there was an all-party national meeting convention in Lahore, where I placed the Six-point Programme before the Subjects Committee of the then convention as the programme for the constitutional solution of East Pakistan's problems *vis-a-vis* those of West Pakistan. The Six-point Programme stipulates full regional autonomy both for East Pakistan and West Pakistan.

Then my party, the East Pakistan Awami League, accepted the Six-point Programme and we started holding public meetings to mobilise public opinion in its favour so that economic and other disparities existing between the two wings might be removed.

At this the Government machinery and the leaders of the Government party, including the President, threatened me with 'language of weapon' and 'civil war' and started harassing me by instituting more than a dozen cases against me. They arrested me first in April 1966 at Jessore, while I was returning to Dacca after holding a public meeting at Khulna *via* Jessore, where I was intercepted and arrested under a warrant of arrest issued from Dacca for an alleged prejudicial speech.

I was produced before the Sub-divisional Magistrate, Jessore, who granted me interim bail. On reaching Dacca, I appeared before the Sub-divisional Officer, Dacca Sadar, who refused to grant me bail, but as I was granted bail by the Sessions Judge, Dacca, the same day I was released. I came to my home at about 7 p.m. At 8 p.m. that night the police came to my house again with a warrant of arrest from Sylhet for an alleged prejudicial speech there.

I was arrested and taken to Sylhet under police escort that

very night. Next morning my bail plea was rejected by the Sub-divisional Magistrate of Sylhet who sent me to jail. The following day, the Sessions Judge of Sylhet was kind enough to grant me bail. On my release, I was arrested at the jail gate by the police on a warrant of arrest from Mymensingh for an alleged prejudicial speech delivered by me there at a public meeting. That very night I was escorted by the police from Sylhet to Mymensingh. I was produced before the Sub-divisional Magistrate, Mymensigh, who similarly refused to grant me bail and sent me to Mymensingh jail. The following day, the Sessions Judge of Mymensingh granted me bail and, on release from jail, I came back to Dacca. All these series of arrests and harassments took place in April 1966.

It was in the first week of May, probably 8th of May 1966 that I addressed a public meeting at Narayanganj and came to my Dacca residence at night. At one o'clock that night I was arrested by the police under Rule 32 of the Defence of Pakistan Rules. [This was followed by the simultaneous arrest of a large number of my party leaders including Khondakar Moshtaque Ahmad, Vice-President, East Pakistan Awami League, Mr. Mujibur Rahman, Former Vice-President, Mr. Aziz, Secretary, Chittagong District Awami League, Mr. Nurul Islam Chaudhury, Former Treasurer, East Pakistan Awami League and Mr. Zahoor Ahmad Choudhury, Labour Secretary, East Pakistan Awami League.

A few days later, Mr. Mizanur Rahman Chaudhury, MNA, Organising Secretary, East Pakistan Awami League, Mr. A. Momen, Advocate, Publicity Secretary, Mr. Obaidur Rahman, Social Welfare Secretary, Mr. Shamsul Huq, President, Dacca District Awami League, Mr. Hafez Mohammad Musa, President, Dacca City Awami League, Mollah Jalaluddin Ahmed, Advocate, Member, East Pakistan Awami League Central Body, Capt. Mansur Ali, Former Minister and Vice-President, East Pakistan Awami League, Mr. Amjad Hossain, Former MNA, Mr. Aminuddin Ahmad, Advocate, Mr. Amjad Hossain, Advocate

of Pabna, Mr. Mustafa Sarwar, President, Narayanganj Awami League, Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmad, Secretary Narayanganj Awami League, Mr. Mohammadullah, Advocate, Office Secretary, East Pakistan Awami League, Shah Moazzem Hossain, Advocate, Mr. Sirajuddin Ahmad, Office Secretary, Dacca District Awami League, Mr. Harun-ur-Rashid, Office Secretary, Rajarbagh Union Awami League, Mr. Sahabuddin Choudhury, President Tejgaon Union Awami League, Mr. Abdul Hakim, Secretary, Dacca Sadar North Awami League, Mr. Rashid Mosharraf, Vice-President, Dhanmandi Awami League, Mr. Sultan Ahmad, Office Secretary, City Awami League, Mr. Nurul Islam, a noted Awami League worker, Mr Abdul Mannan, Officiating Secretary, Chittagong Awami League, Mr. Hasnain, Advocate of Pabna and a number of Awami League workers of Mymensingh, student leaders and labour leaders were put behind the bars under section 23 of Defence of Pakistan Rules. Two of my nephews, Sheikh Fazlul Huq, former General Secretary of East Pakistan Students' League and Sheikh Sahidul Islam, a student of Dacca University were also arrested. Moreover, the present ruling coterie banned the most popular Bengali Daily of East Pakistan *Ittefaq*. The only reason was that, *Ittefaq* sometimes supported the policies of my party. The Government confiscated its Press, kept its editor of international repute, Mr. Tofazzal Hossain alias Manik Mian in prison for a long time and filed a number of criminal cases against him. At the same time, Mr. Idris, former President of Chittagong Muslim Chamber of Commerce, former Vice-President of Chittagong Port Trust and a noted Awami League leader was also thrown into dark cell under Defence of Pakistan Rules.] My party called a general strike on June 7, 1966 to protest against our arrests. During this protest strike throughout the province, 11 people were killed at Dacca and Narayanganj by police firing and about 800 workers were arrested and number of cases were started against countless others.

Mr. Monem Khan, Governor of East Pakistan, told more or less openly to groups of officers and others that so long as he

(Mr. Monem Khan) was there, 'Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would have to be in jail'. This is very widely known.

Ever since my detention I was facing a number of trials in Dacca Central jail where the courts were being held. After about 21 months of detention, on January 18, 1968, at one o'clock I was released from detention and from the jail gate some military personnel forcibly brought me to Dacca cantonment, kept in solitary confinement and was not allowed to see anyone. I was not allowed to read newspapers. In fact, I was completely cut off from the rest of the world for five long months. During this period, I was subjected to inhuman mental torture and I was denied all physical amenities. The less I talk about this mental torture, the better it is.

On June 18, 1968 just one day before the present trial started, it was for the first time that I met Mr. Abdus Salam Khan, advocate, whom I engaged as one my lawyers. I have falsely been implicated in this so-called conspiracy case only to torture me, disgrace and defame me and my party. The main intention of this is to suppress and put hindrance to the realisation of the legitimate political and economic demands including those for regional autonomy for East Pakistan and parity in employment and other fields.

[Before coming to this court, I have never seen Lt. Col. Moazzem Hossain, Ex-corporal Amir Hossain, L.S. Sultanuddin Ahmed, Kamaluddin Ahmad, Steward Mujibur Rahman, Flt. Sgt. Mahboobullah and other Army, Navy and Air Force Personnel involved in this case. I know the three C.S.P. officers—Mr. Ahmad Fazlur Rahman, Mr. Ruhul Quddus and Mr. Khan Mohammad Shamsur Rahman. I had the opportunity to know them while discharging my official duties as a Minister. They were posted then in different capacities under the Government of East Pakistan. But I did never discuss politics with them nor participated in any conspiracy. I did never go to the place of Lt. Col. Moazzem Hossain or Mr. Kamaluddin's residence in Karachi. Neither there was any meeting between me and

Lt. Col. Moazzem Hossain nor any at Mr. Kamaluddin's residence in Karachi. There happened no discussion regarding this alleged conspiracy with any one at my place or at Mr. Tajuddin's residence. Those people never went to my place and I also did never give any money to anyone involved in the alleged conspiracy. I did never ask Dr Saidur Rahman or Manik Chaudhury to cooperate in this alleged conspiracy. They are among hundreds of my party workers in Chittagong. My party has three Vice-Presidents, forty-four Executive Committee members, one General Secretary and eight Secretaries. Many of the office-bearers of the East Pakistan Awami League are former Ministers. MNAs and MPAs. Five members of the present National Assembly and ten of the Provincial Assembly belong to my party. In Chittagong I have my party's District and City Presidents and Secretaries, former MNAs and MPAs and many other influential and resourceful persons. I have not asked for any help from any of these people. It is surprising that I should request an ordinary businessman, Manik Chaudhury and an ordinary L.M.F. Doctor, Saidur Rahman for any help! Rather, Dr Saidur Rahman was expelled from the Awami League for opposing the Awami League nominee, Mr. Zahoor Ahmad Choudhury in the National Assembly elections in 1965. I never went to the residence of Dr Saidur Rahman.]

I am President of the East Pakistan Awami League, a constitutional political party having a definite and constructive manifesto and programme for the economic, political and social uplift of the country. I wanted justice to both the wings of the country as envisaged by the Six-point Programme. What I think good for the country I have always expressed openly within constitutional limits and still then I have been made to suffer by the ruling clique and vested interests who want to perpetuate their exploitation of the Pakistan masses, particularly East Pakistanis by suppressing me and my party.

[In support of my statement, I would further like to submit before the Honourable Tribunal that I have been implicated in

this false case as a move to take revenge on me. The press statement of January 6, 1968 issued by the Home Ministry, Government of Pakistan listed 18 persons as accused and my name was not there. It was further mentioned in the statement that all those accused had admitted their guilt, the investigations were almost complete and soon the case would be forwarded to the court for trial.

In the light of my experiences as a former Minister, I would like to make this comment on the press statement of the Home Ministry that no statement can be issued from any department before personal investigation and approval of the records by the Secretary of that Department. And statements relating to such important matters need prior approval of the President or the Prime Minister.

The present case also is nothing but an outcome of the policy of repression and suppression mentioned earlier. Moreover, this case is a heinous move by the present rulers who have spread out a net of conspiracy to continue exploitation by the vested interests. I did never do anything or get myself involved in any conspiracy whatsoever in connivance with any officer of the Army, Navy or Air Force.

I plead myself not guilty and I know nothing of this alleged conspiracy.]

Appendix 6
Development Expenditure in East and West Pakistan

(in Millions of Rupees)

Period	*Development Plan Expenditures*			*Outside Plan Expenditure*		*Total Development Expenditure*	*Total Expenditure*	*Development Expenditure in Regions as Percent of all Pakistan Total*
	Total	*Public*	*Private*	*Works Program*		(1+4+5)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
East Pakistan								
1950/51-1954/55	1,000	700	300	—	—	1,000	2,710	20%
1955/56-1959/60	2,700	1,970	730	—	—	2,700	5,240	26%
1960/61-1964/65	9,250	6,250	3,000	—	450	9,700	14,040	32%
1965/66-1969/70	16,560	11,060	5,500	—	—	16,560	21,410	36%
West Pakistan	**Indus Basin Works Program**							
1950/51-1954/55	4,000	2,000	2,000	—	—	4,000	11,290	80%
1955/56-1959/60	7,570	4,640	2,930	—	—	7,570	16,550	74%
1960/61-1964/65	18,400	7,700	10,700	2,110	200	20,710	33,550	68%
1965/66-1969/70	26,100	10,100	16,000	3,600	—	29,700	51,950	64%

Note : Public sector development expenditure of the Provincial Govt. plus that of Central Government on projects located in the Province, mainly based on Planning Commission estimates. Private development expenditure as estimated by Planning Committee.

Source: *Report of Advisory Panels for the Fourth Five-Year Plan, Volume* 1, Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, July 1971.

Appendix 7
East Pakistan's Share of Exports and Imports

(In Millions of Rupees)

Year	Foreign Imports			Foreign Exports		
	East Pakistan	*Pakistan*	*Percentage share of East Pakistan (1-2)*	*East Pakistan*	*Pakistan*	*Percentage share of East Pakistan (4-5)*
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1948-49	282	1,459	19.3%	429	958	44.8%
1949-50	385	1,297	29.7%	629	1,194	52.7%
1950-51	453	1,620	28.0%	1,211	2,554	47.4%
1951-52	763	2,237	34.1%	1,087	2,009	54.1%
1952-53	366	1,384	26.4%	642	1,510	42.5%
1953-54	294	1,118	26.3%	645	1,286	50.2%
1954-55	320	1,103	29.0%	732	1,223	59.8%
1955-56	361	1,325	27.2%	1,041	1,784	58.4%
1956-57	819	2,335	35.1%	909	1.608	56.5%
1957-58	736	2,050	35.9%	988	1,422	69.5%
1958-59	554	1,578	35.1%	881	1,325	66.5%
1959-60	655	2,461	26.6%	1,080	1,843	58.6%
1960-61	1,014	3,188	31.8%	1,259	1,799	70.0%
1961-62	873	3,109	28.1%	1,301	1,843	70.5%
1962-63	1,019	3,819	26.7%	1,249	2,247	55.6%
1963-64	1,489	4,430	33.6%	1,224	2,299	53.2%
1964-65	1,702	5,347	31.7%	1,268	2,408	52.7%
1965-66	1,328	4,208	31.6%	1,514	2,718	55.7%
1966-67	1,567	5,192	30.2%	1,575	2,913	54.1%
1967-68	1,327	4,655	28.5%	1,484	3,348	44.3%
1968-69	1,850	4,897	37.8%	1,543	3,305	46.7%
1969-70	1,813	5,098	35.6%	1,670	3,337	50.0%
Pre-plan						
1948/49-1954/55	2,863	10,218	28.0%	5,375	10,734	50.1%
1st Plan						
1955/56-1959/60	3,125	9,749	32.1%	4,899	7,982	61.4%
2nd Plan						
1960/61-1964/65	6,097	19,920	30.6%	6,301	10,596	59.5%
3rd Plan						
1965/66-1969/70	7,885	24,050	32.8%	7,786	15,621	49.8%

Source: *Monthly Statistical Bulletin*, various issues, Central Statistical Office, Government of Pakistan.

Appendix 8

Election Results

PAKISTAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Name of Party	*No. of seats contested*	*Province-wise Result*					*Tribal areas*	*Indirectly elected women's seats*	*Total*
		East Pakistan	*Punjab*	*Sind*	*NWFP*	*Baluchistan*			
Awami League	166	160	—	—	—	—	—	7	167
Pakistan People's Party	122	—	64	18	1	—	—	5	88
All Pakistan Muslim League (Qayyum Group)	132	—	1	1	7	—	—	—	9
Muslim League (Council)	119	—	7	—	—	—	—	—	7
Muslim League (Convention)	124	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	2
National Awami Party (Wali Group)	61	—	—	—	3	3	—	1	7
Pakistan Democratic Party	108	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Jamat-e-Islami	200	—	1	2	1	—	—	—	4
Jamait-ul-Ulema-i-Islam (Hazarvi Gr.)	93	—	—	—	6	1	—	—	7
Markazi-Jamait-ul-Ulema-i-Islam (Thanvi Group)	Not known	—	4	3	—	—	—	—	7
Independents	300	1	3	3	—	—	7	—	14
		162	82	27	18	4	7	13	313

EAST PAKISTAN PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY

Name of Party	*General seats*	*Indirectly elected women's seats*	*Total*
Awami League	288	10	298
Pakistan Democratic Party	2	—	2
National Awami Party (Wali Group)	1	—	1
Jamat-e-Islami	1	—	1
Nezam-e-Islam	1	—	1
Pakistan People's Party	—	—	—
Muslim League (Council)	—	—	—
Muslim League (Convention)	—	—	—
Muslim League (Qayyum Group)	—	—	—
Krishak Sramik Party	—	—	—
Independents	7	—	7
Total No. of Seats	300	10	310

Appendix 9

Broadcast Declaring Independence from Bangladesh Radio on March 26, 1971

On the morning of March 26, 1971 the following announcement was broadcast by a radio station controlled by the Bangladesh Liberation Army :

Today Bangladesh is a Sovereign and Independent State. On Thursday night West Pakistani armed forces suddenly attacked the police barracks at Rajarbagh and the EPR Headquarters at Pulkhana in Dacca. Many innocent and unarmed people have been killed in Dacca city and other places of Bangladesh. Violent clashes between the East Pakistan Rifles and Police on the one hand and the armed forces of Pindi on the other, are going on. The Bengalees are fighting the enemy with great courage for an independent Bangladesh. Resist the treacherous enemy in every corner of Bangladesh. May God aid us in our fight for freedom.
Joi Bangla !

Appendix 10

The Proclamation of Independence

Mujibnagar, Bangladesh
Dated 10th day of April, 1971

WHEREAS free elections were held in Bangladesh from 7th December, 1970 to 17th January, 1971, to elect representatives for the purpose of framing a Constitution,

AND

WHEREAS at these elections the people of Bangladesh elected 167 out of 169 representatives belonging to the Awami League,

AND

WHEREAS General Yahya Khan summoned the elected representatives of the people to meet on the 3rd March, 1971, for the purpose of framing a Constitution,

AND

WHEREAS the Assembly so summoned was arbitrarily and illegally postponed for indefinite period,

AND

WHEREAS instead of fulfilling their promise and while still conferring with the representatives of the people of Bangladesh, Pakistan authorities declared an unjust and treacherous war,

AND

WHEREAS in the facts and circumstances of such treacherous conduct Banga Bandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the undisputed leader of 75 millions of people of Bangladesh, in due fulfilment of the legitimate right of self-determination of the people of Bangladesh, duly made a declaration of independence at Dacca on March 26, 1971, and urged the people of Bangladesh

to defend the honour and integrity of Bangladesh,

AND

WHEREAS in the conduct of a ruthless and savage war the Pakistani authorities committed and are still continuously committing numerous acts of genocide and unprecedented tortures, amongst others on the civilian and unarmed people of Bangladesh,

AND

WHEREAS the Government by levying an unjust war and committing genocide and by other repressive measures made it possible for the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh to meet and frame a Constitution, and give to themselves a Government.

AND

WHEREAS the people of Bangladesh by their heroism, bravery, and revolutionary fervour have established effective control over the territories of Bangladesh,

WE the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh, as honour bound by the mandate given to us by the people of Bangladesh whose will is supreme duly constituted ourselves into a Constituent Assembly, and

having held mutual consultations, and

in order to ensure for the people of Bangladesh equality, human dignity and social justice,

declare and constitute Bangladesh to be Sovereign Peoples' Republic and thereby confirm the declaration of Independence already made by Banga Bandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and

do hereby affirm and resolve that till such time as a Constitution is framed, Banga Bandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman shall be the President of the Republic and that Syed Nazrul Islam shall be the Vice-President of the Republic, and

that the President shall be the Supreme Commander of all the Armed Forces of the Republic,

shall exercise all the Executive and Legislative powers of the Republic including the power to grant pardon,

shall have the power to appoint a Prime Minister and such other Ministers as he considers necessary,

shall have the power to levy taxes and expend monies,

shall have the power to summon and adjourn the Constituent Assembly, and

do all other things that may be necessary to give to the People of Bangladesh an orderly and just Government.

WE the elected representatives of the People of Bangladesh do further resolve that in the event of there being no President or the President being unable to enter upon his office or being unable to exercise his powers and duties due to any reason whatsoever, the Vice-President shall have and exercise all the powers, duties and responsibilities herein conferred on the President.

WE further resolve that we undertake to observe and give effect to all duties and obligations devolved upon us as a member of the family of nations and by the Charter of United Nations.

WE further resolve that this proclamation of independence shall be deemed to have come into effect from 26th day of March, 1971.

WE further resolve that in order to give effect to this instrument we appoint Prof. Yusuf Ali our duly constituted potentiary and to give to the President and the Vice-President oaths of office.

Signed :
Prof. Yusuf Ali,
Duly Constituted Potentiary
By and under the authority
of the Constituent
Assembly of Bangladesh.